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DETECTIVE STORIES

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

AUG. 1, 1923 NO. 137

Feature Story

THE CONSUMING DEATH

by Gilbert Hammond

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A Splendid Number Coming

IF you enjoy this magazine we are sure you will be more than pleased with the next number of "Mystery." We are exerting every effort to make it one of the most interesting and attractive issues we have ever published. Let us tell you something about it, for we do not want you to miss this rare treat. First and foremost, there is the feature story, one of those lively narratives of detective skill pitted against lawbreakers' cunning. The title is:

"MRS. DEANE'S JEWELS"

And the authoress, Beatrice Luisi, is a master hand in the art of weaving a detective romance containing an all absorbing plot. Once she grips your attention you cannot stop reading until you finish the story.

Next in importance, we are going to give you the opening chapters of a short serial, written by Edgar Daniel Kramer, under the title

"WHEN A MAN'S DEAD"

This is a very peculiar story of mystery, containing only one prominent character. But it will fascinate you. All of our readers know this author's power to entertain, but his forthcoming serial is the best piece of fiction he has ever produced, and we hope you will not miss it.

Carl H. Getz has contributed another of his splendid analytical articles on the subject of crime detection called

"A STUDY IN CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDENCE"

It is written in a popular vein and cannot fail to please those of our readers who prefer scientific articles that are true to nature.

Our next issue will also contain some rousing short detective stories and a few yarns of underworld characters. There will also be a collection of bright, snappy short articles of an unusual type and other features of the greatest interest.

THE EDITOR.

THE CONSUMING DEATH

by Gilbert Hammond

CHAPTER ONE

WHEN David Brenner's daughter remained away from home all night he was seriously frightened. Berenice Brenner had departed on a shopping trip and had promised to be home in time to join him at dinner; but when, the next morning, just as he had picked up the phone to communicate with the police, a servant handed him a letter from The Consuming Death, he became frantic.

"Mr. David Brenner," the typewritten notification ran, "this is to inform you that your daughter is in the hands of The Consuming Death. You know what this means; my past reputation will speak for itself. If your daughter's life is of any importance to you, you will immediately secure fifty thousand dollars in cash within an hour after you receive this. You will then phone Cortlandt — at exactly half-past ten a. m. for instructions as to where to come with the money.

"The slightest attempt to cause my capture will result in your daughter's agonized death. You will divulge the contents of this letter to no one. If you fail to obey any detail of my instructions your daughter will be disposed of in a peculiarly terrifying manner and her remains will be lost to you forever by means of my ingenious process which consumes the human body alive. It will be well to remember as a very significant fact that I have never been known to fail to carry out my threats.

"THE CONSUMING DEATH."

Brenner sank into a chair in a semi-faint, clutching the letter in his hand. His heart pounded irregularly, and shocks were dangerous for Brenner's vital organ. His vision was blurred, and for some time he could not so much as think coherently. And when finally his brain resumed its function it served only to picture the horror of his daughter's situation more vividly. Totteringly he rose to his feet. It was now nine o'clock. Could he raise fifty thousand dollars within the hour? Utterly impossible! His money was completely tied up in investments and property. It would take over two weeks to raise that amount. But could he convince The Consuming Death of this?

Brenner knew from the elusive murderer's previous operations that the fate of his daughter depended upon a meticulous obedience to each of the specifications set forth in the letter. Twice before, when parents

had either defied him or found themselves incapable of meeting his demands, they had received polite letters to the effect that the party held for ransom was now, in a most literal sense, no more, that every human vestige of him had been totally consumed, and that they might now settle down to their mourning without agitating themselves with useless apprehension. And his alleged victims were never seen again.

The police, though often, as they thought, hot on his trail, had never been able to find a tangible trace of him. This was due as much to his personal courage as to the willingness of his methods, for on numerous occasions he had taken considerable risks of capture. His face was totally unknown at headquarters. Those whom he had spared could tell of nothing but a white-robed, masked figure assisted by two masked men. Neither had they any knowledge as to the location of the place where they had been incarcerated, which was brief enough when the money was forthcoming. Invariably they had been taken there while unconscious from drugs, and when released had been blindfolded and removed in a closed automobile.

Was it possible to borrow fifty thousand dollars, Brenner asked himself despairingly. He had no intimate friends who could loan him that much. David Brenner was far less rich than was generally assumed; moreover, he was a man of few acquaintances. Could he borrow it on his property? Perhaps, but the legal processes necessary were not to be hastened, and his need was immediate!

Berenice, his only daughter, for twenty years his one consolation in his lonely, isolated existence—Berenice condemned to certain death—a mysterious, incredibly horrible death!

"Oh, God!" he sobbed in spasmodic gasps, while his heart pounded jumpingly; "what am I going to do? What am I going to do?"

He sat rocking his head in his hands for a long time. Then he said to himself desperately:

"I'll ask him to give a couple of days leeway. But if he won't do it? By God, he's got to do it! In the meantime I'll call in a private investigator. I don't dare tell the police. He might have some way of finding out. Friends at headquarters maybe; a private detective is safer."

He arose and staggered weakly into his library, closing and locking the door behind him. It lacked several minutes of half-past ten. He spent the interval dazedly attempting to frame his plea to the voice whom he would address over the wire. The clock struck the half-hour; Brenner mechanically removed the receiver and called the number stipulated in the letter.

"Hello!" came from the other end of the wire in a low voice. "Is this Brenner?"

"I can't—I can't do it," Brenner moaned. "I can't raise the money in such a short time. I'll need two days. I'll give you the money; I'll give you anything; but don't hurt her. Don't hurt her."

"Oh, you'll need two days." A significant chuckle came over the wire. "Well, I'm sorry she's not present to say a few last words, so——"

"No, no, no!" Brenner screamed desperately. "Just two days, two days! If you'll wait until then I'll give you a hundred thousand!"

There was a deliberative silence on the other end for some moments; then the voice said slowly:

"To-day will be counted as one. On the day after to-morrow you will receive a letter with another telephone number. Call up again at exactly the same time. And see that you have a hundred thousand dollars by that time; otherwise you will be an immediate recipient of one of my obituary notices. I've said too much over the phone already. Risky instrument to use, you know. Good-by!"

A click on the other end signified that he had rung up. Brenner tremblingly replaced the receiver and tried to call to mind the name of some reputable criminologist. Who was that young man who had had such great success in trailing a nationally operating gang of jewel thieves, who had recently solved a murder mystery of considerable prominence? He had seen frequent references to him in the newspapers. Earl

something; now what was the name? Warren! That was it. Earl Warren. He must get in touch with him.

He searched through the telephone-book for the name. He believed he had read that Warren lived in Manhattan somewhere. He found several Earl Warrens and methodically determined to phone them all. By great good fortune he got the right man with the first call.

"What's that you say?" Warren shouted eagerly back across the wire when Brenner explained his miserable situation. "The Consuming Death? Be glad of a chance to nab him. Give me your address. I'll be right over."

In another half-hour Warren was in the library of Brenner's Park avenue house learning the details of the case. He was a well-built young man with a reckless, handsome face. His countenance habitually wore a rather humorous expression, but a pair of determined, steely gray eyes was quite sufficient to correct any erroneous impression an opponent might gather concerning the man's character.

Before Brenner had finished his brokenly told tale it became apparent that he was rapidly becoming very ill; his heart, palpitating unevenly, was slowly giving way. Warren phoned for a physician and did not leave until he arrived.

"If I don't recover his daughter inside of two days he'll die," Warren thought when he left the house. "Well," reflectively, "The Consuming Death will think I'm some little consumer myself after I start to mix it up with him."

Following the most obvious course, Warren's first move was to trace the telephone where The Consuming Death had received Brenner's call. It turned out to be a booth in a cigar store in Vesey street. There was one more step to be taken—that of subjecting the letter Brenner had received to an exhaustive examination. If this failed to reveal anything he would have to draw upon that ingenuity for which he had gained his reputation, but nothing was quite so stimulating to Warren as to find himself for the moment completely baffled.

CHAPTER TWO

WITH the purpose of submitting the letter to an analysis Warren took the subway for his home on East Twentieth street. Leaving the train at the Eighteenth street station, he emerged into Fourth avenue. It was late afternoon; the sun, though nearly ready to retreat behind the buildings on the other side of Union Square, was still hot enough to make those in their spring overcoats very uncomfortable. An incessant rumble of wagon traffic filled the air, through which a melody from some wandering hurdy-gurdy was occasionally heard.

Dodging the flying taxicabs automatically, Warren made his way across Fourth avenue, and following it meditatively for two blocks uptown, turned down Twentieth street. He had walked but a few steps toward Third avenue when he was attracted by the movements of a tall, well-dressed, rather elderly man with a cane directly in front of him. He seemed to stagger slightly as he walked and bent his body as though in pain; his steps were hesitant, and Warren occasionally heard a very barely audible groan. Evidently the man had had a sudden attack of illness.

Before Warren could offer any assistance he suddenly collapsed. Warren sprang forward to pick him up, and inside of thirty seconds a knot of eager spectators had surrounded them. He was a man of evident importance; his face was distinguished; he wore a trim Vandyke beard of iron gray. Gaspingly his features convulsed in pain, but he managed to whister an address in Madison avenue to Warren. The detective immediately summoned a taxicab and assisted the man inside. Then stepping in himself, he closed the door, and the cab whisked off, leaving the group of spectators staring vacantly after it for several moments until it occurred to them that it was all over, upon which they dissolved.

Inside the cab the man showed no sign of recovery; delayed frequently by traffic jams, it was half an hour before they reached their Madison avenue destination.

Warren carefully assisted him up the

steps of a large brownstone house with the upper windows boarded. Next to it on one side was the empty lot of a house that had been lately torn down; on the other a house evidently unoccupied. Warren rang the bell several times, but there was no answer. The man feebly indicated a key in the side pocket of his coat. Warren obtained it and opened the door, assisted his companion into the hall and piloted him to a room in the back, where he had expressed a wish to go. The door of the room had been open, but he had no sooner seen the man comfortably seated in a lounge chair than he heard it suddenly slam shut, accompanied by the quick metallic scraping of a key turning in the lock.

Spinning quickly around, Warren found himself staring into the muzzle of a small but deadly automatic leveled steadily at his head. From behind him an arm reached out and quickly deprived him of his own automatic. A square-jawed, burly man was holding the weapon and grinning at him contemptuously.

Realizing the futility of an immediate struggle, Warren shrugged his shoulders and with a faint smile of self-disgust observed coolly:

"This looks something like a trap. I don't know who you are, and so far as I know you don't know who I am. So what's the idea?"

"We don't know who you are, don't we?" said the burly individual derisively. "You're Deteckatuff Earl Warren. As to who we are, the gentleman behind you can tell you that."

The gentleman who a few minutes before had been so helpless and decrepit now arose lithely from his chair and faced Warren. The latter noted, for the first time, the subtle suggestion of the satanic in the man's features. With Warren's captured gun in his hand he smiled—a lingering, chilling, almost devouring smile.

"I wish to thank you," he said sardonically, "for your courtesy in assisting a fellow being in distress. The recollection of such a good deed will undoubtedly be a great consolation to you during your last hours."

"I suppose I'm to infer from that that my last hours are rather near," Warren replied with forced nonchalance. "By the way, I've got a pretty good idea of who you are, but do you mind introducing yourself?"

The man slowly drew his body into a stiff, erect posture, breathing hard, and fixed Warren with a pair of dark, gleaming eyes. For a brief, frightened moment Warren was almost certain he was staring into the face of Satan himself.

"You now have the privilege," he said slowly in a voice as icy and chilling as a December wind, "of meeting face to face a gentleman whom no detective has ever met before. I am The Consuming Death!"

"A very unique honor," Warren responded easily. "I thought it was you. I'm rather curious about that man-eating contraption of yours. Will I have a chance to get a line on it?"

"You will have a most excellent chance to become intimately acquainted with it," The Consuming Death replied suggestively.

Warren realized that he was in a deadly trap. But the detective's remarkable facility in squirming out of tight places, to the amazement and confusion of his enemies, was the one reason for his continued existence. He had no intention of submitting to his capture. Casually he leaned against a mahogany writing desk and determined to keep the conversation going at any cost until he contrived to sidle himself into a strategical position for an onslaught.

"If you had refrained from mixing yourself up in this little transaction between David Brenner and me," the other continued sternly, "you would not at this moment be a condemned man. When one of my watchers saw you go up the steps of David Brenner's house I immediately prepared for two executions, that of you and of Brenner's daughter, Berenice!"

"What!" Warren gasped. "Is she dead?"

"It may be of some temporary gratification to you to know that she is not."

Warren considered that he had sidled far enough over toward The Consuming Death to be in a fairly advantageous position for his next move. With a sudden spring he threw himself on the man who had given

himself this sinister smile, and during the struggle that followed the man with the automatic was forced to withhold shooting because of the danger of hitting the wrong person.

For all his age Warren's opponent proved to be a man of great strength. He tried to pinion his arms behind his back, but The Consuming Death pulled loose. He stumbled backward; Warren fell on top of him, and they rolled over and over on the floor like a pair of infuriated tigers. Suddenly a pair of hands which gripped like steel found Warren's throat. Then came an immense pressure and that indescribably agonized sensation of being in such tremendous need of breath that no heave of the lungs could satisfy it. He clawed wildly at the merciless talons; into his fading consciousness came a recollection of an old trick for just such contingencies. He groped for The Consuming Death's face. With his thumbs he found the eyeballs, to which he applied a fierce pressure. With a cry of intense pain The Consuming Death released Warren's throat and groped blindly at his avenging fingers.

Bewildered, the man with the weapon did nothing more than to hesitatingly circle them as they struggled.

"Hit him on the head, you damned fool!" The Consuming Death snarled out. Before the man had fully assimilated this instruction Warren had released his grip and sprung to his feet. His appropriated revolver lay a few feet distant on the floor. He heard the crack of an automatic as he dived to get it. Regaining his weapon, he fired in what seemed to be the direction of the armed man. His vision was blurred and distorted from the terrific strangulation he had just experienced. His bullets landed in the ceiling. The room seemed to be whirling dizzily, and it seemed as though he spent hours sitting on the floor wondering to where The Consuming Death had disappeared.

He staggered to his feet, vaguely speculating as to why the man had refrained from shooting. He blinked his eyes to restore normal vision and lifted his revolver; then something wet, something with a sickening medicinal smell, was clapped to his nose from behind. He seemed to be whirling with incredible speed into an infinity of darkness. The revolver dropped from his nerveless hand; his strength wilted away. In another moment his body had collapsed unconscious to the floor.

CHAPTER THREE

WARREN recovered consciousness with a sensation of renewing a remote acquaintance with life. He seemed to have lived years of a Nirvana-like existence during the interval of his unconsciousness. He had not the slightest conception of his surroundings. His hands and feet were tied, and he lay on his back in a horribly uncomfortable position, his hands pinioned behind him. There was a feeling of intense constriction about his head. His senses were still so numb that it was necessary for him to exercise his jaws in order to assure himself that he was not gagged and to attempt to open his eyes to discover that he was tightly blindfolded.

He seemed to be lying on glass. By exploring kicks with his bound feet he discovered he was in a shallow glass tub or receptacle of some sort. He squirmed and struggled with his bonds for a few moments, but the exertion wore him out. The drug had given him a terrific headache; its nasty smell was still heavy in his nostrils.

As the nerves in his body slowly regained their normal sensitiveness he became gradually conscious of a peculiar, intensely disagreeable sensation throughout his whole frame. The effects of his drugging had caused a continuous roar in his ears, but through this delusive din he could detect the sound of a steady buzz—a sound as of swift sputtering. The noise, once he had concentrated on it, was easily enough audible. It was immovable; it neither approached nor receded, neither increased nor diminished.

What was this agonizing, unseen torture that steadily and insistently bit into his flesh? From his face to his toes it seemed

as though some invisible presence were jabbing innumerable needles into his body.

He shifted his position frantically; he squirmed desperately from one side of the tub to the other; several times he attempted to climb out, but he was in a weakened condition and deprived of the use of his limbs and eyes; his futile efforts terminated in periods of helpless exhaustion.

Presently he became aware of the fact that the floor of the glass receptacle inclined to slope toward a common point. Cramping his body into a convulsive position, he groped with his hands in search of this centre. A faint draft blew on his fingers as they encountered a hole about the size of a silver dollar. Exploring it with his fingers, he found it appeared to lead down into a pipe of some sort. For what purpose was the pipe there? Could it be a drain-pipe—a pipe to carry off the fluid residue of that which was deposited in the tub?

In spite of his great natural stoicism Warren's horror and despair gave way in a moan. Could that buzzing noise be in any way associated with the prickling torture he was undergoing? A numbing, appalling thought occurred to him. Was his body in the process of being consumed by this terrible invisible scavenger? Was his body gradually approaching such a condition that his remains might be washed down the drain-pipe? Was this The Consuming Death?

He had no definite conception as to how long he had been lying there—hours, he imagined. He remained quiet for a time, listening to that mysterious buzzing splutter. Then he became aware of the faint metal grating of a key in the lock. The door of the room in which he was imprisoned was being softly opened. He heard it creak slightly on its hinges and apparently remain open while some one stood hesitantly at the threshold. Then he detected a light footstep proceeding toward him across the floor. Somebody had grasped him by the shoulders and raised him to a sitting position. His hands were hastily untied, then his feet. After working on the blindfold for a few moments a voice—a feminine voice—said excitedly:

"I can't get it off. Take my arm and step over the side."

He clasped the arm—a smooth, soft, girlish arm—and thus steadied managed to scale the sides of the tub and attain the floor. Like a blind man guided by his dog he was led through a door, along a hall and into another room. There the girl halted and whispered:

"We've got only a few moments to get out of here. Try to untie that blindfold."

The knot withstood some valiant plucking before it finally yielded. He noted that the rag with which his eyes were bound was of a peculiar texture and smelt of some strange chemical. Throwing it on the floor, he spent a brief interval blinking while he accustomed his vision to the light. He became aware of a pair of brown, solicitous eyes and a pair of full red lips, anxiously parted, revealing just the gleaming fringe of a row of pearly teeth. The rest of the countenance quickly filled in: a soft, rounded chin, a nose with a tantalizing little upward tilt and a head crowned with glorious silken black hair—just a trifle flustered and disarranged and none the less appealing for that. Warren, with an ever-present romantic streak in the most desperate of situations, thought her quite adorable. His gasp at her appearance was one of elemental appreciation.

"Are you—are you Berenice Brenner?" he questioned.

"Yes! Were you sent to search for me?"

She knew from his eyes that this was his mission. Without waiting for an answer, she asked in a voice shaken and tremulous with subdued sobs:

"How did father take it? Did it—did it kill him? The shock to his heart—the doctor said——"

She broke off; her breast heaved with sobs that made no sound. Tears suddenly welled into her eyes; they shone with the lustre of grief.

"There, don't agitate yourself about that," Warren said, lightly patting her hand in a half-consoling, half-caressing manner. Your father isn't dead by any means. I'll get you to him if I have to trickle down a drain-pipe for it."

Her look of heart-impelled gratitude, the glory of her radiant smile through her tears, filled Warren with a wild desire to seize her in his arms and, defying all human powers of frustration, carry her directly and immediately to her father.

"He told me that a man who had come to find me was being slowly put to death in that room," she explained, referring to The Consuming Death. "He said that as soon as the body was disposed of I was to follow. I managed to escape from the room in which I was held, stole downstairs and found the room you were in. The key was in the lock, so I——"

"——Found it necessary to rescue the one who came to rescue you. What's that?"

A shuffling noise came from the head of a flight of stairs in a hall directly outside the room in which they were hidden. Several people, it seemed, were descending. Softly Warren closed the door which opened out upon the hall. Before throwing off the electric light which illuminated the room he surveyed it for some possibility of escape. For the first time he realized their predicament. The room was almost completely bare, equipped with neither a sheltering closet nor an additional exit. There were two windows, looking out perhaps on the vacant lot, but they were boarded up.

"Stay close by me," directed Warren. "We're trapped, and we'll either have to sneak out quietly or make a break for it."

She grasped his arm in such trusting obedience that he half-wished the rôle of rescue might last indefinitely. They crouched tensely against the wall and listened.

"I think we might go and take a look at him," a voice, that of The Consuming Death, was saying. "His appearance should be rather interesting by this time. And he won't be dead yet by any means."

Warren found himself momentarily sickened by this devilish reference to the ghastly torture he had just barely escaped.

"How about the girl?" some one else asked.

"In his customary quiet, icy tones The Consuming Death answered:

"Nothing is more certain and inexorable than her immediate death. Nothing in heaven or hell can save her."

The girl trembled and caught her breath in fright. Warren felt the hand on his arm quiver.

"Something on earth," he muttered in desperate determination through clenched teeth, "is going to save her and get you."

CHAPTER FOUR

HE heard them enter the room where he had so lately been imprisoned. Some one started a soft laugh which broke off abruptly in the middle.

"He's gone!" came The Consuming Death's voice in white-hot fury. "He must have been released. Berger, get upstairs and see whether that girl has escaped!"

Somebody galloped up the stairs again in frantic strides.

"If he's managed to get out of this house we're finished," The Consuming Death resumed once more in those quiet, deadly tones. There was utmost silence for an interval. Warren felt that The Consuming Death was listening for some suspicious sound within the house. Presently the man who had been despatched upstairs came tearing down.

"She's escaped!" he shouted. "Picked the lock with something!"

"I thought so," The Consuming Death answered in a voice as frigid and formidable as an Arctic night. He was silent a while—a silence which suggested a receiving instrument tensioned up for the detection of some revealing message in the atmosphere. The two hiding within the dark room attempted to subdue their breathing for fear the sound might be caught by the abnormal faculties of The Consuming Death. They heard him break the silence with a brief whisper.

Warren prepared himself.

"They're going to come in here," he breathed to the girl. "Keep directly behind me. We'll have to make a break for it as soon as they open the door."

In a state of the utmost tension they waited for the door to swing open; the knob was turned and open it came. For a fraction of a second one of the assistants stood in the doorway blinking into the darkened room. Then he went down in a heap from a terrific jolt on the jaw administered by Warren. They trampled over his inert body in their frenzied haste to attain the hall.

The Consuming Death and his other assistant were unprepared for this quick and determined action on the part of his captives. Warren knocked a leveled automatic from the hand of The Consuming Death's henchman and immediately curled him up on the floor with a solar plexus jab. Only The Consuming Death now intervened between them and a long expanse of hall leading to the door to the street.

He stood directly in front of them, his dark eyes burning viciously. Gibraltar could not have seemed more formidable and impassable than he. Desperately, in disobedience to Warren's instructions, the girl tried to dart past him. The Consuming Death's long arm shot out. His steel-like talons found her soft throat; with a frigid, inflexible thumb he applied a deadly pressure to her windpipe. She managed to pull herself loose, but remained too terrified to renew her attempt at escape. Though The Consuming Death had intercepted her movements with cat-like readiness, he had scarcely so much as looked at her. His wary eyes had been almost unwaveringly fixed on Warren. His countenance was now strikingly satanic; the eyes with which he glared at the detective glowed like embers from hell. In an attitude of blazing, calculating defiance he waited for Warren's attack.

Like something hurled from a catapult, Warren threw himself upon his opponent, and like a solid wall of masonry the man met him. With amazing fistical technique he parried Warren's savage blows. There was something monster-like about his fierce, immovable resistance. He struck, countered and intercepted with a deadly, vicious precision. With all his boxing ability, with all the slugging power of his heavily muscled arms, Warren found it impossible to beat him back.

One of the men behind Warren had risen unsteadily to his feet. Regaining the automatic from the floor, he grasped it muzzle first and aimed a skull-cracking blow at Warren's head. The girl screamed and made a belated attempt to intercept him. At the same moment Warren, oblivious of the man's imminence, had lurched forward toward The Consuming Death. The automatic caught him a painful, deflecting blow in the small of the back. Realizing the hopeless odds with which he would shortly have to contend, Warren made a last furious onslaught. He lashed out with a desperate right hook. And for once it squarely landed—landed with a jaw-cracking, pile-driving thud.

His opponent tottered; the knees commenced to sag and he was on the verge of complete collapse. Then, with astounding reserve strength, he pulled himself suddenly erect.

But Warren and the girl had already rushed past him. The man with the automatic was hot on their heels, but he did not dare fire for fear of shattering the glass of the front door. Explosions in themselves are common enough in New York; few citizens can distinguish between the noise of a blowout and the report of a gun, but a loud clattering of glass, particularly late at night, would have been sure to have attracted attention. Even well within the house, soundly boarded up as it was, pistol shots at this hour would be audible enough to cause suspicion.

Warren had given the door a powerful tug, but it was locked. Spinning about abruptly, he had propelled the girl before him up a flight of front stairs. The man with the weapon bounded up after them, three steps at a time. Behind him came The Consuming Death, shaken in body but inexorable in his savage, deadly purpose.

The plan of the second floor was similar to that of the first. There was a long hallway with bare, adjoining rooms and another flight of stairs in the back. Running the length of the hall, they descended again by way of the back stairs. Without attempting

to attain the first floor, they followed the stairs downward toward what seemed to be the basement. It was dark here. Narrowly they escaped missing their steps in their precipitate course, which would have incurred a dangerous fall into an inky gloom.

Attaining the concrete floor of the basement, they found themselves in intense, impenetrable blackness. Lacking in any means of illumination, they could only clasp hands tightly and feel their way along the humid wall. The cellar was damp; the two were exhausted and panted heavily; the moist air they were forced to breathe into their lungs gave them an almost uncontrollable impulse to cough. The atmosphere was tainted with an odor, foul and inexplicable. The girl, stoical as she was, felt momentarily sickened and clung faintly to Warren for a second.

The sound of their pursuers' steps on the bare cellar stairs reverberated throughout the otherwise still house. At the foot of the steps they stopped. There was an indecisive shuffling. Then one of them ran upstairs again, evidently for a flashlight. Some one prowled about tiger-like in the dark.

Leading the girl and groping noiselessly along the wall, Warren's exploring hand suddenly encountered the knob of a door, opening perhaps into a back yard. Very softly he attempted to pull it open. It made a slight groaning noise.

Immediately a match was lit by the prowler in the dark; the peering, satanical face of The Consuming Death was revealed by the flickering glare, as though he carried his own sulphurous hell about with him in his pockets. Without any further attempts at discretion, Warren pulled open the door, and the two leaped out into the fresh air of the night. But high wooden fences surrounded them on every side. Warren decided in an instant that it would be impossible to surmount them.

"Don't scream," Warren whispered tersely to the girl. "The chances are it won't be heeded, and the noise will be sure to draw their fire. Crouch against the side of the house."

They had no sooner pressed themselves against the house than their pursuers piled out into the yard, flashing their lights on the fences ahead of them.

Immediately Warren and the girl dived inside the house again, pulling shut the door. He made a feverish attempt to secure it, but in the dark he could find neither bolt nor hook. There was nothing but to make for the flight of stairs again. But they had completely lost their bearings and had no idea of its location.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE door was banged suddenly open and a flashlight was turned full upon them, which lifted also, to some extent, the surrounding gloom of the cellar. By this illumination Warren looked desperately for the flight of stairs, and when his eyes encountered them they encountered also the third man of the devilish trio grinning at its foot. His automatic was leveled directly against them. They were cornered!

Directly in back of them the girl had discovered a door—a peculiar kind of door, made of narrow shiplap strips of wood, which might conceivably lead to another flight of stairs. It was at least a possibility, and this was not the time or occasion to leave any possibility untested. The girl had already hastened to it, apprising Warren of its presence with a brief exclamation; Warren whirled about to follow.

There was no movement on the part of their pursuers. They grinned in devilish anticipation as they watched the actions of the cornered fugitives.

The girl had opened the door. On the point of rushing in she suddenly brought herself to a frantic stop. Warren, close on her heels, dashed headlong toward the mysterious exit. He saw the girl abruptly bring herself up short and heard her scream:

"Don't! For God's sake! It's a——"

He heard an icy, exultant laugh. But he could not stop; the headlong momentum of his furious rush carried him on, and in spite of his desperate attempt to check himself

by bracing his feet against the concrete floor, he slid straight through the opening.

The cellar floor seemed to suddenly slide out from under his feet; he was falling! Nothing can be quite so terrifying as to be hurtling, with ever-increasing velocity, into the impenetrable unknown. The pit was as dark as inter-planetary space and almost as cold. Down, down, down! Was the void bottomless?

Then he struck—struck with a thud that jarred his brain and jolted his internal arrangement, but left him reasonably intact. For he had landed on something comparatively soft. By passing his hands over it he discovered it was a mattress. Evidently victims consigned to this Stygian pit were not intended to be killed by the fall. There was a penetrating morgue-like chill; the odor which they had detected in the basement was so intense that Warren was convinced this must be its generating source.

What were they going to do with the girl? What were they going to do with him? He shouted several times, and his magnified voice reverberated back at him from the sides of the pit. He pulled his coat about him and shivered.

"If I only had a flashlight," he said. "Or a match. What's that nasty smell? An hour of this will kill me."

He was startled for a second by a dim, sickly light which pervaded the pit. It had been turned on by means of some switch outside the pit and came from the faint electric bulb suspended from the ceiling of the hole, far above his head. He could see by its ghastly light the door through which he had precipitated himself. It was built at the very brink of the pit. His place of imprisonment seemed to resemble a large cistern with a sheer circular wall of smooth solid masonry. The very thought of attempting to scale it seemed unworthy of a sane mind.

"That smell!" he exclaimed again. "What the devil can it be?"

There seemed to be something lying on the floor not far from the mattress—a pile of cloth and some protruding, whitish object. Indistinctly he could see another similar pile. A revolting suspicion entered his mind. He crept over to the heap and charily plucked at a fragment of the cloth with his fingers. The cloth held for a second, then its rotten fabric abruptly ripped. He stared for a moment at the ghastly protrusion from the covering of the eaten rags.

So that was the secret. He was seized with an involuntary nausea. He crept back to the mattress very much shakened.

"Left to die," he articulated numbly. "Left to die with a pair of decaying corpses."

With the hardihood of his profession he strove to subdue that feeling of utter terror which insistently sought to possess him. For the time at least he succeeded. But there is a limit to human courage, and sanity itself, adapted to the requisites of normal life, has its bounds. Warren was not afraid to die. By the very nature of his calling he was accustomed to considering it an ever imminent possibility. But for him, the honorable, the acceptable death was one in which he had had at least a fighting chance—a gun fight, a personal encounter. But to wilt slowly, to perish agonizingly and to rot away, for the purpose of providing additional company for the next poor, condemned devil——

He had no weapon, otherwise he might have dispatched himself while his courage was still firm and his mind sound. There was no doubt in his mind that he was to be left there to die in exactly the same way that had evidently been the fate of the others. He shouted a few times, more for the purpose of breaking the ghost-like silence than in any expectation that he would be heard or heeded. He glanced up at the light.

"Very considerate on their part to provide illumination to die by," he said with bitter humor. He walked about the sides of the pit rapping the stones for some hint of a concealed exit. But they were perfectly solid and compact.

How did The Consuming Death descend into the pit when he so desired? It occurred to him that he probably never felt any such impulse. Once a victim was consigned to his hell hole The Consuming Death struck his name from his books and

the incident from his memory; the affair was past history. He wondered whether the skeletons were ultimately disposed of so as to destroy all evidence of their murder.

Presently he heard a faint, whistling noise. It seemed to come from some point over his head.

"I'm getting head noises," he thought hopelessly. "This tomb's got me going. I might as well prepare to finish up."

But the sound continued, without break or vibration. It was clear and insistent. Certainly that was no fanciful noise. He gaped up the perpendicular stretch of wall, but he could not detect the source of the disturbance. He was grateful at least for something on which to concentrate his mind.

"Peanuts!" he rollicked in desperate facetiousness. The whistling noise reminded him of the monotonous melody of peanut stands.

In a short time a new odor came to his nostrils. It was a smell he was perfectly capable of classifying. Any man who had seen war service in the United States Army would have recognized it instantly. Poison gas! But what humane impulse had suddenly inspired The Consuming Death? For it was neither the flesh-eating mustard gas nor the tissue-tainting chlorine gas, but one which merely suffocated—dioxide gas!

"I'd rather die this way than to go crazy and beat my brains out against the wall," muttered Warren as he stretched himself out on the mattress. The gas became stronger and stronger. Staring fixedly at the ceiling, Warren at last noted a small jutting iron pipe which proceeded from the wall, far out of reach, from which the gas issued.

He was gasping now. His chest worked in long, painful heaves. Gradually the oxygen in the air was superseded by the gas. His body began to convulse; he drew his knees up to his stomach and clawed feebly at his throat. His head buzzed; there was a roaring sound in his ears. Fantastic images obtruded themselves upon his vision. With the sensation of an astral body floating into infinity he merged into unconsciousness.

Years later, it seemed, he was belatedly revived. He was lying on a carpeted floor. Peering into his face was the visage of The Consuming Death.

"Ah!" Warren heard him say softly. "So you've come to already. I have something still which might interest you. I should like to show it to you before I finally dispose of you."

And a slow, meditative smile came over his diabolically contorted face.

CHAPTER SIX

HE was lifted up and placed on a chair where he was bound by The Consuming Death's two assistants. No sooner had he glanced about the room than he realized that this had been the place of his former confinement, though he had been blindfolded the first time. For there was the glass tub in which he had lain!

The windows of the room were boarded. Set between them against the wall was a formidably intricate scientific or experimental apparatus of some sort, the complexities of which Warren could not comprehend. He was certain that this was the instrument used by The Consuming Death for the disposal of his victim's bodies. But it seemed an absurdly harmless affair. There was an enormous, hollow projector-like thing, resembling somewhat an immense searchlight, but without lens. It was supported on a substantial steel frame. On each side of the frame stood some large metal containers, each of which, by means of a flexible tube composed of metal bands, connected with the projector and, penetrating some distance within, stopped at a point short of a common centre. Warren noted that the mysterious metal containers had small dials and indicators upon them and that the tubes were tapering and copper-nozzled where they tended to run together within the projector. A storage battery back of the apparatus was also connected with the projector by insulated wires.

"Now tell me," inquired The Consuming Death, who had been surveying Warren as he examined the instrument, "what does

your keen and deductive mind make of that?"

"An ingenious piece of devilishness," Warren answered with assumed indifference. "So that's the consuming death!"

"That," his captor replied, selecting his words with the utmost relish, "is the consuming death. A most effective, complete and thoroughly consuming death. I decided at the last moment to dispose of you by this means. Your demise otherwise would have been too sudden and easy. But before I place you in that glass receptacle I propose to give you a complete and practical demonstration of its effectiveness. Riessler, bring in the charming Miss Berenice Brenner."

Frantically Warren tugged against the ropes which held him in the chair.

"What do you mean, you villain?" he shouted. "Are you going to have me watch her eaten up alive?"

"My dear man," expostulated The Consuming Death softly as his assistant hastened through the hall into the adjoining room, "I am giving you an opportunity to witness an exclusive demonstration of the most marvellous scientific achievement in the world. Really your lack of appreciation pains me."

"So the devil is the father of science as well as lies," gritted Warren. "Is there any possibility of its blowing up and taking you with it?"

The Consuming Death made it plain that he could not answer such vulgar invective. He went on smoothly:

"I am enormously proud of my achievement, but the nature of its use prohibits my exhibiting or exploiting it. The sensation it would cause in scientific circles can scarcely be conceived by one whose profession is man-hunting."

"One whose profession is man-killing evidently finds it an easy enough thing to imagine!" interjected Warren.

"Experimental science," replied The Consuming Death, "has necessarily caused not only death but often intense suffering—all of which is justified by its ultimate attainments. It may interest you to know that I duly record every case in which I use this instrument together with pertinent observations."

Riessler re-entered the room carrying Berenice in his arms. Warren saw that she had been drugged. He laid her, bound, in the glass receptacle, where, in her pale loveliness, she seemed like another Juliet lying in the monument of the Capulets.

"Guess she'll be stirring pretty soon," commented Riessler.

"All the better," The Consuming Death responded. "You and Berger may now leave the room. Stay outside the door in case I need you."

The two obeyed; when the door had slammed shut The Consuming Death seated himself on a chair and facing Warren gazed at him intently for a short interval. Then he said very slowly and solemnly:

"Do you know who I am?"

There seemed to be something vaguely familiar about the man's countenance, but Warren had no definite impression of his identity.

"I might have noticed your face in the Rogues' Gallery," Warren answered, "especially if those whiskers are a recent acquisition."

Something glinted dangerously in the other's eye. Then he asked:

"Did you ever hear of Hugo Wirtz, the scientist?"

Warren gave a start that made the chair to which he was bound creak. Hugo Wirtz! The brilliant scientist, the man whose fame was universal for his findings concerning the properties of light and the practical application of certain forms of its energy. Wirtz had gone suddenly and violently insane while engaged in experimenting with the effects of certain light waves on animal tissue. It was said at the time that prolonged concentration had caused his breakdown. He had been committed to an asylum where, after a year, he escaped together with a couple of other inmates. On that occasion his picture had been widely circulated in the newspapers, but no one had ever found a trace of him again. As Warren stared into the countenance before him an impression became stronger and stronger.

"I am Hugo Wirtz."

Science in the hands of a madman! Warren turned ghastly white and squirmed uneasily in his chair. Wirtz had been observing him closely. Suddenly in a burst of anger he exclaimed:

"So you also think I am insane, like the rest of those asses who consigned me to a life with babbling, driveling madmen. I have a fate arranged for them some time in the future. In the meantime I at least have you!"

He preserved a tense silence for a moment; then he rose from his chair with an icy laugh and advanced toward the apparatus at the other end of the room. Kneeling, he carefully adjusted the indicators on the dials of the metal containers. He arranged the tubes within the projector and pressed a button against the side of the wall, thereby darkening the room. Warren waited tensely for his next move. Reaching for the storage battery, he pulled a small lever.

Warren had expected something explosive, something terrifying; instead there came to his ear a low, familiar, sputtering sound. He had anticipated some intense flare; instead a small part of the room was barely illuminated by a faint, dark violet light that tended to blend in with the darkness rather than to dispel it. The projector was pointed directly at the girl lying in the glass receptacle, not more than ten or twelve feet from the generating source of the light. Her pallid complexion was altered under the rays to an abnormal, purplish hue. Wirtz advanced toward her and remained in the faint light long enough to blindfold her.

"Unfortunately," he explained, "the tissue of the eye is too soon affected, thereby giving premature access to the brain, producing immediate stupor and consequent death. It is one of my greatest accomplishments that my discovery is perfectly effective while the body is still in possession of its full vitality."

Warren cursed incoherently.

"My dear fellow, be calm," reasoned Wirtz. "There will be no noticeable effect for an hour. The instrument takes twenty-four hours to completely dispose of the remains. You yourself were under it scarcely half an hour. In the meantime, to enhance your appreciation of this marvelous accomplishment, I will try to explain the scientific principles upon which it works. That is, to the extent that your elemental sleuthing mind is capable of comprehending."

CHAPTER SEVEN

IN spite of his frantic concern for the girl fated to be slowly devoured by that faint purple eye, he found himself fascinated with the instrument and filled with a certain curiosity concerning its manipulation. The scientist's words held him with a loathing interest.

"You will observe," Wirtz went on, "that this instrument is capable of producing only light and, at that, only an almost imperceptible kind of light. There is no heat—very little even at the light's source."

He seized a piece of newspaper and, walking to the instrument, thrust it into the far from intense radiation emitted in a common glow by the several nozzles within the projector. For an unbelievably long time the paper remained intact. Finally it commenced to curl a little and a faint border of carbon black lined its edges. There was no bursting into flame; the black region extended very slowly. Satisfied with his demonstration, Wirtz crumpled up the paper and threw it aside.

"So you see," he resumed, "it scarcely produces a minute fraction of the heat contained in the sulphur tip of a match, and is not capable of the illumination of a tallow candle. Then what, you ask"—he was as genial as though Warren had asked—"produces the deadly effect of my instrument? My answer is—Light. The light you cannot see. The invisible light."

"My eyes are pretty good," retorted Warren.

"My dear fellow," responded the scientist, "no human eye can detect the light produced by the actinic wave. You realize perhaps that light is produced by waves in the ether. The longer of these waves produces

heat, such as a furnace produces. The medium light, such as is produced by an electric bulb, and the very short—ultra-violet—produces a peculiar, penetrating, disintegrating form of energy. There is enough of this ultraviolet light in the sun's rays to cause great irritation to the bodily tissues. Sunburn, for instance, is produced solely by the ultraviolet ray and not by the heat of the sun, as is generally supposed."

"And this is your consuming death!" cried Warren. "This ultra actinic——"

"Be quiet and listen," Wirtz remonstrated, as though Warren should really be delighted to have an opportunity to do so. Warren saw the unconscious girl stirring slightly; she would soon be awake to her situation; then what?

"Bear in mind," the scientist resumed, "that no instrument ever invented has so much as remotely approached mine in disintegrating ability. The intensity of my instrument is beyond all comparison with the ordinary carbon arc and quartz mercury lamp commonly used for the production of ultraviolet. Mine is the only instrument in existence capable of disintegrating blood-filled tissue. And how have I accomplished this? By the use of new and unknown chemical mixtures as a source of radiation. I have managed to translate the energy of these chemicals almost entirely in terms of short, invisible wave light, wasting next to no energy in the retarding visible waves and abolishing to an enormous extent the infra-red or heat rays. The intensity of ultraviolet light produced by the fusion of these chemicals can scarcely be conceived. Why, if the instrument were perfect there would be no visible light at all and that charming young lady there would appear to be lying in complete darkness. But it would enable the instrument to consume her body a great deal sooner."

"What," asked Warren slowly, "is the effect of a few minutes under these so-called ultraviolet rays?"

"It has the effect of transforming the chemical structure of the cells of the tissue into injurious salts."

"That makes it perfectly clear, of course," Warren snapped. "Does that mean a permanent skin affliction?"

"Not necessarily permanent. The slight exposure you received, for instance, would be a source of annoyance for not more than a year."

A low moan came from the glass tub. The girl had returned to consciousness. She pulled at her bonds and mumbled something incoherent.

"Let me tell you the effects the light will have on the young lady," Wirtz continued in an icy, gloating voice. "I might mention that, properly adjusted to the middle ultraviolet region, the wave lengths will penetrate the clothing and leave it intact, while the human tissue is consumed. Another wave length is necessary to dispose of the clothing. The blindfold, of course, has been treated so as to shut out all rays. Gradually you will see that lovely face raise and swell in hideous red patches preparatory to the complete consuming of the body. You will see——"

In all the time that the scientist had been speaking Warren had been working on the rope that secured him to the chair. He had found that with a finger and thumb he was able to reach one of the knots. During the scientist's learned explanation he had managed by industrious picking to loosen and finally unravel the knot, unnoticed by Wirtz. Suddenly he had jerked his arms free and interrupted the gloating description with a vicious smash on the point of Wirtz's bearded chin. It was totally unexpected. Wirtz wilted forward and rolled off the chair; for the moment he was "out." In a few brief seconds Warren had untied the girl, removed her from the glass tub and shaken her into a complete realization of her situation.

"You're—you're not dead!" she gasped as the blindfold was removed from her eyes and she stared into his face with one arm unbelievably — yet thrillingly — around his neck.

"He's the boy that can tell you that!" responded Warren, pointing to the inert scientist with a happy, almost juvenile, grin. "Now to get outside the door. It's guarded, but I've got his gun."

But the door had been already opened; The Consuming Death's two henchmen, suspecting trouble, had stepped in to investigate. Warren immediately covered them with the gun. He had caught them with their automatics still at their sides.

"Lay those guns on the floor," he commanded. They sullenly did as they were ordered. "Now you," he continued, indicating the man on the right, "just pick up that chair and hit that instrument one good smash. Get me? The man-eating days of that contraption are over."

The man fearfully picked up the chair and advanced toward the instrument.

"No, no, no!" feebly protested the scientist, attempting to struggle to his feet. "No!" he shouted, almost screamed, as the man poised the chair in the air. "Don't! Don't! Curse you, don't do it, I say! Oh, God, what have you done?"

He broke off with a sobbing moan and sank back to the floor, head buried in arms, as he saw the chair crash down into the elaborate mechanism. He was not a devil now, nor a murderer, but a scientist who sees the fruit of years of patient investigation destroyed in an instant—and wantonly.

When finally he arose to his feet he seemed broken and old. He tottered over to the wreck of his instrument with an expression of dull unbelief on his face. So Warren left him—an old man puttering over the ruins of his dearest interest in life, murderous instrument as it was.

Keeping the revolver warily concentrated on the two assistants, Warren and the girl backed out of the door. As Warren slammed and locked it with the key that was still in the lock, they heard a snarl of consummate rage followed by the noise of a violent commotion.

Cautiously Warren and the girl negotiated the hall, fearing a possible fourth member of the gang. As they crept downstairs the noise of the imprisoned men increased. There seemed to be a furious struggle. They could hear the racket made by chairs being thrown around, muffled shouts and scuffling feet. Then came a loud crash as of something toppled over; the sound suggested the ultraviolet ray instrument. A loud, vengeful wail followed this, then a quick scream, which was almost immediately squelched and turned into a momentary gurgle. For several moments there was silence. Then there came a sudden roar and the sound of a body slumping heavily to the ground.

The reverberations of the shot died away and blended into the final ghostly silence of a house of death.

CHAPTER EIGHT

REACHING the street, hatless and coatless, they were picked up by a suspicious taxi driver, whom they instructed to drive to the Park avenue home of Mr. Brenner.

In the cab Berenice's self-control gave way at last. She broke into hysterical, body-racking sobs. It occurred to Warren as a duty to console her. Accordingly he placed his arm about her, upon which she laid her head on his shoulder. Warren felt very comfortable indeed, and very excited. He articulated something to the effect that they had been tested by fire and that he was sure she was the only girl for him. Then he proposed—crudely but intelligibly, with the agreeable conviction that he was a quick worker. And—with the proper maidenly qualifications, of course, that she really should have known him longer—she accepted. It was as a happy betrothed pair that they burst in on David Brenner.

It was nearly dawn. Brenner was lying moaning and tossing in his bed, muttering incoherently, a trained nurse by his bedside. As the two entered he turned on his side and stared in almost unbelieving joy. Berenice rushed to him.

Warren spent the next few moments blinking industriously and making a great business of motioning the trained nurse out of the room with a covert thumb, which that lady was in great doubt of obeying.

"Mr. Brenner," Warren declared finally, advancing toward the bed where Berenice was sitting with her arms around her

father's neck, "it pains me greatly to be forced to tell you that you really cannot have your daughter back again. I got her away from The Consuming Death, and I'm going to keep her."

Brenner looked blank for an instant; then a smile spread gradually over his face as he glanced from one of the young people to the other.

"Well," he commented with a sigh. "I suppose I might as well lose her to you as to The Consuming Death."

According to the newspaper accounts next day, three men were found dead in the Madison avenue house among the wreckage of some utterly incomprehensible instrument. Two had evidently been strangled to death; the other, a man of distinguished appearance, had committed suicide by shooting himself through the head.

"Wirtz probably had an insane fit," Warren explained to Berenice, "and in retaliation for the destruction of his instrument attacked the man whom I compelled to smash it with the chair. The other man evidently sprang to his companion's aid and brought The Consuming Death's wrath down on himself also. He strangled both of them with those iron talons of his." Warren rubbed his own neck reminiscently. "Then, probably with the revolver he had stolen from me, he put it against his head and blew his brains out. The police will probably be considerably mystified until I report the whole affair and straighten them out."

Here his manner changed to something more serious as the talk veered to a subject of more importance than all the police departments and detectives in the world.

"Do you know, dearest, when I first looked into your eyes I knew that at last——"

FINGERPRINTS BY RADIO

A NEW method of fingerprint identification, which has been devised specifically for the purpose of trapping international crooks and famous criminals and which when put into wide use may serve to solve in the future what have been in the past classed as baffling murders and robberies involving large sums of money or jewelry, was explained recently to the delegates at the opening of the third day session of the international police conference which was held at the Hotel Commodore, New York City.

In this new system wireless, cables and telegraph will play an important part, these agencies being utilized to flash to the great police centres of the world through the use of a code, the identification of a criminal established in some one great city.

To illustrate the system the police chiefs present were told how after a daring crime had been committed in New York the practice of the new system would be to send out through all available means of rapid communication a series of numbers, which when applied to the uniform code fingerprint identifications on file in every police bureau of importance in the world, would be available for checking up purposes. Once checked up the New York police would probably be advised quickly of the identity of the person or persons committing the crime should it so happen that the perpetrators of it could be so identified.

The new system was explained to the delegates by Hakon Jorgensen, Sub-Director of the Copenhagen Police; Eric Schaffer, Military Judge of the Copenhagen Department, and Miss Ingeborg Hellner-Neilson, fingerprint expert of the Copenhagen department.

Technically the method to be used is called the "distant fingerprint" system, and based on six sample prints worked out from acard index of 15,000 prints.

Police Commissioner Enright, President of the conference, told the police chiefs present that the development of this "distant systsem" was one of the greatest achievements developed in recent years.

Slicker Slim's Last Job

By CHARLES REVILLE FRINGESS

THE facts in the case are these: It was an unusually cold December night. Northern Pacific engine No. 1123 tugged uncertainly away at a long, snake-like string of box-cars as it ploughed through the foggy outskirts of a Washington city.

In the fifth box-car from the caboose "Frisco" Pete, notorious yegg, and "Slicker Slim," youthful burglar, sat side by side. Each resembled a huge letter N as they blinked on into the darkness. Neither had spoken for hours. So far as Slicker Slim was concerned, it was not altogether a matter of efficiency. Frisco Pete's lynx eyes had noticed several times during the day a nervous restlessness in his companion that bore mute evidence of an inner conflict. Therefore the wise old yegg was not surprised when Slicker Slim blurted out the information that he was going straight.

Frisco Pete caught the words above the rumbling, grating noise, then spat voluminously across the box-car floor.

"You'll play the devil doin' it!"

"What makes you think so?" Slicker Slim demanded.

"Jest this, boy," the yegg replied knowingly. "I ain't been yeggin' it up and down the Pacific Coast for twenty years, omittin' some six years in stir for nawthin'. I've met up with most of the reg'lars in my time west of the Rockies. Believe me or not, Slim, they all at one time or another spill this same gospel gush. But it ain't in the cards, lad. Remember what one of 'em literary gents said about hell bein' asphalted with good intentions?"

Slicker Slim ignored the question. He shivered, fumbled at the lone button on his coat, then thrust his fists up under his sweater.

Frisco Pete turned his flashlight upon the youth's face, snapping it off almost instantly. He was a low-born spirit not easily moved to sympathy, but he caught something in the flickering contortions of Slicker Slim's face that softened his attitude.

"Is it a moll, Slim," he asked kindly, "or jest plain homesick?"

"I want to see the old man again," Slicker Slim replied mournfully.

"The old man, eh?"

"Yes."

"And the old lady?"

Slicker Slim hesitated as if debating the wisdom of confiding in Frisco Pete.

"Mother—died—two years ago," he finally admitted, a reverential tenderness creeping into his voice. "That was just before I beat it without letting dad know where I was going. Pretty raw deal I dealt the old man. Got peeved over some work he set me to do in the store. My fault. Dad's alone now and getting old. I've got a hunch he needs me."

"What line—the old man?"

"Second-hand clothes—in Minneapolis."

"I coulda bet it from the way you always played the second-hand dumps down South. You knew too much about 'em for a kid, and your getaways made me proud to know you. For covering up tracks, Slim, you've got a fox faded."

The box-car seemed to stop short, lurch forward, then rear back like a frightened horse upon its haunches.

"Know where we are, Slim?"

"I think it's Tacoma."

"Ever hit this burg before?"

"A couple of days last year."

"Pull a job?"

"No. Just dropped off the rattler to spot a second-hand layout."

"In that case I don't need to wise you up to nawthin'."

As the train slowed down Frisco Pete cautiously lowered his voice.

"You mean it, Slim—this wantin' to go home?"

"You're right, Frisco, and, what's more, I'm going—if——"

"I get you, Slim—the last job. It always kinda gets under the hide. And that *if* is a whale of a word. The boys in stir say it over and over till it sticks 'em like a knife. Don't wonder it kinda choked you. But remember, Slim, our only capital is nerve. You've got lots of it, lad."

Slicker Slim slid back the door a few inches and peeped out. A few street lights from the business section on lower Pacific avenue flared up whitely in the thickening fog like illuminated cotton balls.

"A peach of a stick-'em-up night, Frisco," declared Slicker Slim eagerly. "The fog's getting thicker fast. I'm flat broke, hungry and—and cold. For half a cent I'd make it the street for once."

Frisco Pete emptied a generous portion of snuff into his left cheek, tossing the box to a far corner of the car.

"Don't do it, Slim," he admonished. "I've seen it tried. Don't work out worth a damn. My line's soup. It's carried me safely across some rough places. We get along best at what we know. You know burglin'. Stick to your trade always, Slim."

"I guess you're right."

"Right? You said it, kid."

The yegg hesitated as his hand groped for Slicker Slim's arm.

"At that, Slicker," he added, "hanged if I wouldn't drop off and give you a lift if me and an old side-kick what's jest out of stir didn't have somethin' spotted up the line."

"That's all right, Frisco. I wouldn't take any one in on my last job. The last time you do anything is the biggest of all. It's make or break with me now. But it did kind of get my goat—this thinking about it all, wondering if the bulls would nab me just when I was ready to go straight."

Frisco Pete's grip tightened reassuringly on the youth's arm.

"You'll have plenty of nerve when the time comes," he encouraged. "What you need worser'n salvation is a hot teabone steak under your ribs. I'm flatter'n a pancake, kid, or I'd divvy up. Good luck!"

Slicker Slim slid the door open a little wider and dropped to the ground and the freight crept slowly past him. Cautious now, cunning, alert, he waited impatiently for the caboose to go by, then started up the track for the Pacific avenue crossing. He stopped once, only once, and looked back over his shoulder with a quick, nervous jerk, then bent forward through the thickening fog.

Slicker Slim was negligently clad against the damp cold that now seemed to pinch him on all sides as with tiny fingers. And as if to add to his discomfiture his thoughts accused him with that sickening reiteration he so dreaded. He was sick and tired of it all—this dodging the police; this eternal watchout for detectives; this fear-stricken roving from city to city with hunger and cold ofttimes for one's bedfellows. And as Slicker Slim and self-restraint were strangers, he cursed roundly the fortune that had tricked him into such an existence.

As he turned into Commerce street, with its blocks of second-hand stores, Slicker Slim plunged into a dense billow of oncoming fog, so thick now that he could scarcely see the nearest street lamp. For all he could see, beyond that lay nothing. He jostled a passerby, who politely begged his pardon, laughed good-naturedly, then started on his way.

Slicker Slim had scarcely walked a dozen feet when his painfully overstrung nerves jerked like a hooked trout as a policeman's helmeted headgear passed slowly by within a foot of him. The figure melted silently into the fog. Then, with uneven strides, the youth ducked into the darkened doorway of Fong Woy's vacated chop-suey joint.

Well hidden now by the fog from passers-by, the boy peeped cautiously out into the street. He could see nothing—nothing save a faint gleam of light to his right that severed the fog like a huge cleaver. He knew it came from the second-hand store he had spotted when last here. He always

chose the last store on the street to burglarize because his dad owned the end store on Upper Washington avenue back in Minneapolis. The end stores always seemed to do well; besides, he understood them better than the others. He was more at home at the end of the street.

Slicker Slim started forward, hesitated, then stepped slowly backwards into the doorway. If the cold pinched him at first the heavy fog now seemed to have penetrated to his very marrow. Each time he shivered it seemed to intensify the hunger that gnawed at his vitals. He had not tasted food for two days, and was fast approaching that hunger stage when even a flagging courage will let one laugh at his fears. Frisco Pete was doubtless right about the teabone steak.

The foggy street looked inviting. It was almost free of pedestrians now. The thick vapor had sent people scampering home like a pack of besieged rats. It would be but the work of minutes for Slicker Slim to grope his way up the Fifteenth street hill for several blocks, hold some one up, then lose himself in the fog. It would doubtless take his victim an hour on a night like this to set the bulls on his trail. By that time he would have eaten the teabone steak in some warm restaurant.

But Frisco Pete's parting words haunted him: "Stick to your trade always, Slim." Doubtless the wise old yegg was right. Frisco Pete's experience was worth much, and he always seemed to think along a straight line. Yes, he would take Frisco Pete's advice. He didn't wish to make a mess of his last job.

Slicker Slim jerked his cap down over a mop of unkempt black hair, felt reassuringly of his six-shooter, then stepped resolutely into the street. He crept forward noiselessly, using his right hand against the glass front as a guide. As he reached the light an oldish customer was just entering the second-hand store. This was just what Slicker Slim desired. Peeping in through the glass front, he could dimly see the thinly clad old man following the proprietor to the back of the store.

Opening the door carefully, the young crook stepped inside and as noiselessly closed the door. He could indistinctly hear but not see the two men who were evidently bargaining over a second-hand overcoat in the rear. With much of the agility and cushioned tread of a panther Slicker Slim, his shoes soled and heeled with rubber, tiptoed to a darkened jog under the balcony stairway. Like a flash he crouched behind a tall box of unpacked goods.

After some bargaining back and forth Slicker Slim could hear the two men walking to the front door. It closed with a bang. In his father's store back in Minneapolis this would have indicated that the old man had failed to make a sale.

The shop-keeper busied himself about the store for a few minutes, then all was still. Slicker Slim wondered what he was doing now. He might be going over his cashbook to compute the day's sales. The chances were the shop-keeper didn't have a cash register. His father back in Minneapolis never owned one, either. Said they were a useless expenditure and entirely too handy for thieves and hold-up men. Besides, it was poor business to let waiting customers see you ring up the price of a sale. They might be waiting to purchase the same article.

The shop-keeper was soon bestirring himself again. Slicker Slim could hear him rummaging about at the back of the store. Yes, he was turning off the rear lights. He could see from his hiding-place the lone front light over the doorway. The globe was fairly plastered with dust. This pleased him immensely.

The front door opened, then shut, almost before Slicker Slim could realize that the proprietor was leaving. As the night lock snapped back into place he stood up quickly and listened for retreating footsteps. An antiquated cuckoo clock chortled hoarsely the ninth hour. It was the only sound that came to him except the muffled din of belated traffic from the street.

The yegg threaded his way through the untidy store to a long, unpartitioned room at the rear. A lone, far-spent candle lighted the room from the bottom of an inverted tomato can on the large kitchen table. The

flame flickered from a tiny draught that oozed in between the casing and a carelessly hung door.

Slicker Slim hastily drew the blinds down before the two windows, then shut the door leading from the store into the room. This was just as he had found it. Although he felt instinctively that he was alone, he seemed almost conscious of something both intimate and strange. His cautious imagination caused him to make a hasty search of the place—the closet, the kitchen table, the bed, the pantry.

The search ended, he smiled shamefacedly at his credulity.

The scant, antiquated furniture untidily placed, the unswept, uncarpeted floor, the dirty dishes in the sink, the bedclothes wadded up into a ball at the foot of a single bed all told Slicker Slim too plainly that the shop-keeper was a bachelor—an old miser perhaps. This simplified matters considerably. He could handle a lone man much better than a fool woman or kids who might cry out in fright.

Slicker, with that rare deduction absorbed from others of his ilk, began to analyze his intended victim's knowledge of thieves. He always made an intelligent search of every place he invaded. Slipshod methods did not go with Slim. But his search had scarcely started when he stopped with a jerk.

He felt much like an invading bee in a glass hive as he heard a key grating in the front door lock. The door opened, and he knew the shop-keeper was returning. The large kitchen table offered the nearest shelter, so Slicker Slim ducked down beneath it. He drew his six-shooter and waited.

The shop-keeper was coming towards the room whistling in unconscious employment. The door opened slowly, then shut. It was too late now to put up the blinds. Slicker Slim wondered if the man would notice the change. His heart leaped with quickened beats of anticipation. If discovered he wondered what the shop-keeper's challenge would be like.

The crook could now see the man's immense shoes, with the toes pointing towards him, as he shuffled up to the table. He let something fall heavily upon it. Then the shoes turned abruptly and pointed away from the table. He had his back to Slicker Slim now. He must have discovered the drawn blinds!

The yegg sprang to his feet, and the startled shop-keeper pivoted instinctively to defend himself. The butt of Slicker Slim's six-shooter came down with a sickening blow upon his forehead, and the shop-keeper took a step forward, staggered, then fell. The youth, to avoid the noise from the falling body, caught the stunned man in his arms, laying him gently upon the floor.

Slicker Slim rolled the unconscious form over on its side, binding the hands securely at the back with a leather belt. He then tied the feet securely with a bit of twine. It was but the work of seconds. At that Slicker Slim was none too soon. The shop-keeper showed signs of returning consciousness. He must gag the fellow.

But as the crook straightened up his heart seemed to stop beating with a quick intake of his breath. Beads of perspiration covered his face. An incredulous gasp escaped his lips. He stared down at the stricken man, speechless, motionless. His mouth had taken on an oval shape. He felt as if his eyes would bulge out of their sockets.

Just then the shop-keeper returned to consciousness. At first bewildered, then surprised, he looked up into Slicker Slim's face.

"You?" he gasped weakly. "You! God, but—I'm glad—to see you—son!"

Glad to see him! His own father! In pain and with that ugly wound above the eye from which trickled a little flow of blood. Glad to see him! It seemed to Slicker Slim in that moment as if a great hand was squeezing his heart for the last drop of blood.

"Sold out—in Minneapolis," explained the shop-keeper, his face still twisted with pain. "Been looking—all over for you—boy. Just bought here—last week. Good end store. Gad, but I'm glad to find you, son!"

With a stifled sob at his throat Slicker Slim stooped down to kiss the old man's bloody cheek. He *knew* it was his last job!

A Convict Camp

THE world has heard much of the "horrors of convict camps," especially in some of the Southern States, but investigation has shown that the "horrors" were considerably exaggerated, and humanity, spurred by exposure and aided by experience, has wrought great reforms. In truth, it is not easy to combine comfort with security in a prison, but the State of Tennessee modestly claims to have made the "convict camp" so much a success that prisoners esteem it a favor to be sent there, and a transfer from the camp to a regular prison is rated as a sort of punishment.

Tracy City, in southeastern Tennessee, is a place of mines, coke ovens and their usual adjuncts, run by the Tennessee Coal, Iron and Railroad Company, which works the great Sequatchie seam of bituminous coal, and in its mines and ovens there the company employs some 1,400 men, of whom from 325 to 350 are "leased convicts." With the free men the inquirer has no interest, as mining towns everywhere are much alike; but it is worth noting that with all the advantages employed at Tracy City for working convicts, with all the extra inducements offered them and the superior skill of the managers, they still grade 30 per cent. or more below free laborers. Even when a convict is doing his best, on extra time, he falls below a freeman, and on the general average three of the latter do as much as four convicts.

In fact, as repeated experiments elsewhere have proved, the convict class of men are physically weaker than other men. No doubt depression of mind adds something to their natural weakness.

The same company has convicts leased at other Tennessee mines, but Tracy City is their favorite place because the seam is very thick, and convenient for mining, the coal fractures easily, cakes freely, and makes the best of coke. The coke ovens are the favorite situations with the convicts, as they have better chances to make extra time, and a transfer thence to the mines is regarded as a punishment, especially by the negroes, who, as a race, hate underground work, and can endure the heat about the ovens better than the whites. One who reads the rules and reports is astonished at the clockwork regularity of the business, and the great freedom allowed the convicts out of work hours. Here is the summer schedule:

5 a. m.—First bell, to call out the guards.

5:30 a. m.—First bell for convicts.

6 a. m.—Breakfast.

6:30 a. m.—Miners go to work.

7 a. m.—Coke oven men turn out.

7 a. m. to 4:30 p. m.—Work, less lunch time.

5:30 p. m.—Supper.

8 p. m.—Locking-up time.

This is the summer schedule. The winter time-table runs about half an hour later all the way through, the idea being to work the men eleven hours each day during summer and nine hours daily during cold weather, so as to make an average of ten hours a day for the whole year. The men all work according to a task system, and their day's work is ended when the set task is performed. As soon as their tasks are ended, the convicts are free to do as they please. In the mines this time is put in at cards and other amusements. At the ovens it is largely put into extra work, and most of the oven men have plenty of spending money. This they can squander at the store in the stockade. And at the word "stockade" visions of horror arise; but examination of the Tracy camp shows that the managers have solved the problems of uniting security with comfort and justice.

The convict camp consists of four acres in a square, surrounded by a stockade eighteen feet high. In this are the two buildings containing 100 cells each, the dining hall, kitchen, stove, wash-room (each convict must take a full bath weekly), hospital, doctor's office, cisterns and other needed buildings. The drainage is perfect. Earth closets are used and all filth and waste matter is hauled out twice a day. The standard of health is high. The dining-room is also the chapel. Inside this stockade and subject to a few regulations as to hours, the convicts have almost as much liberty as students in dormitory colleges. The colored (and most of them are colored) have a regular choir or glee club, some fairly good fiddlers and a few readers and so-so speakers. But to most of them the favorite enjoyment is the clog dancing permitted at set time in the corridors. Some of the "original" songs are quite amusing, but the mule and the mother-in-law come in as often as among white jokers, as for instance in this favorite:

There was a little old kinky man,
His name was Simon Slick;
He owned a mule with dreamy eyes,
And how that mule could kick!
He'd shut one eye and shake his tail,
And greet you with a smile;
Then give you telegraph with his leg,
And raise you half a mile!
Whoa! I tell you!
Whoa! I say!
Keep your seat, Miss 'Liza!
Hold on to the sleigh.

Each cell is 7 feet long, 6 feet wide and 7 feet 2 inches high, and as there are over 300 convicts to 200 cells, there is necessarily some doubling up, greatly mitigated by the fact that many of the convicts work at night. The bedding is comfortable, the cells are dry and well lighted, and the food is good, so this camp ranks very high in the matter of health. A very surprising feature of the management is that there can be no severe punishment without the written permission of the board of prison inspectors at Nashville, which consists of the governor, comptroller, secretary of State and treasurer of State; and as it often takes several days to secure such permission, the accused can win pardon by confession and increased devotion to duty. Here is an application:

"Jan. 30.

"HON. SECRETARY OF STATE, ETC., NASHVILLE, TENN.:

"SIR.—Please give permission to punish those of the following named convicts, who fail to come up with a reasonable task. The same are now reported for shortage of task. I have given them a reasonable time to make up the shortage, and suppose about nine-tenths of them will come up O. K. (Here follows a list of forty-nine.)

"Yours respectfully,

"S. S. MITTERN, Warden.

"Jan. 31.

"Approved Jan. 31.

"SECRETARY OF BOARD."

The punishment book shows that forty of these escaped by "coming up to O. K.," and nine received ten lashes each. But after all, say the officials and company managers from whom these facts were received, a convict will be a convict still; the criminal nature (and a majority seem to be born criminals) is not eradicated by kindness, and they find many sly ways to injure the company and defraud the State. They burn more shoes and cars at the ovens, break more tools in the mines, get more slate in the coal and generally waste, break and destroy more than free laborers. So, despite the cheap rate at which they are obtained, "leased convicts" are unprofitable, and this company will have no more of them after the present leases expire. So Tracy City is doubly interesting as the type of an experiment soon to be discontinued, and many hundred convicts in camp will soon be returned to the State for some new experiment.

The Clue in the Mail

By MAURICE COONS

THE city was in a turmoil. Prominent judges and other officials slunk silently in and out of their homes and offices with the nervous haste and furtive manner of hunted criminals, for they did not know at what moment their lives would be snatched suddenly away.

Even police headquarters was in a fervor of excitement, every one on the qui vive for the latest news.

In his private office at the end of a corridor Chief Fogerty paced up and down with the quick, nervous stride of a caged panther seeking a means of escape. A large, impressive man in middle life, he radiated strength, energy and power, but now his face was gray and drawn from the strain of the last forty-eight hours.

Suddenly the door opened and a man entered the office.

"Ah! Gregson!" exclaimed the chief, advancing toward the newcomer with outstretched hand, a strained smile momentarily illuminating his haggard countenance. "Sit down. I'm certainly glad to see you. I didn't expect you back for at least ten days."

"No, I wouldn't have been here but for the trouble now raging. As soon as I read about it I gave up the rest of my vacation, to come back and help you clear things up."

Though only twenty-eight, Harry Gregson was one of the best detectives the department ever had. Short, compactly built, quiet but relentless, briskly terse in speech, Gregson had brought retribution, swift and terrible, to many criminals. He was a man whose supreme happiness lay in bringing criminals to justice.

The brief greeting over, Fogarty's face fell abruptly into stern, hard lines.

"Harry," he began, "how much do you know about the situation?"

"Just what I've been able to get out of the newspapers, and that isn't very much. I know that Judge Dowling and District Attorney Ray were brutally murdered on the day that those two foreign gunmen were hung. There must be some connection between these events. That's all I know, chief."

Fogarty puffed furiously at his fat cigar for a moment, then replied excitedly:

"Gregson, those men were killed by friends of the two devils we hung. As you know, poor Dowling was the man who tried their case and Ray prosecuted 'em."

The detective nodded.

"Yes, that's my theory, too. But have you any positive proof that Ray and Dowling were murdered by any certain people?"

"I have some evidence," Fogarty retorted emphatically. "But I'll get to that later. First, I want to give you the details of the case. The two criminals were hung at noon. At four o'clock the same afternoon—that was day before yesterday—Dowling was found lying on the floor in his private office at the courthouse, in a pool of blood, dead. He had been stabbed in the back."

"The devils!" breathed Gregory hoarsely, and his fists clenched.

"Ray was shot at five-thirty the same day on his own front porch from an automobile passing the house. No clues in either case."

"Now tell me about the proof you spoke of."

In answer Fogarty extracted a dirty, crumpled piece of paper from a desk drawer, and handed it to the detective. It was a letter, written in an almost illegible hand-

writing—evidently disguised—and written with red ink. It read:

"To Chief of Police:

"Some your friends make two my friends die. Italian men mad. We kill judge and lawyer what make them hang. I shoot lawyer myself. We fix some more too before we finish. Viva vendetta!

"Presidente Vengeance Society."

"That's strong proof as to why Dowling and Ray were killed," commented Gregson as he returned the letter. "How did you get the letter?"

"It came in the mail yesterday morning. It looks like those fellows had organized to wage another vendetta or war of vengeance on us officials."

"Yes, it does. The best thing is to find this guy who signs himself the president."

"That's going to be your job," announced Forgarty. "The Chamber of Commerce has offered a reward of two thousand dollars for the capture of this man, and I hope you will win it."

"So do I," answered Gregson. "It would enable me to get married right away. "I'm engaged to the——" He paused, and an expression of stunned amazement spread over his face. "Why didn't I think of her before?" he cried joyfully. "There's where I may get a lead. She's an Italian," he explained to Fogarty.

He jumped to his feet and seized his hat.

"You won't hear from me again, chief, until I've got some news for you." He left the room with the grim, impatient eagerness of a bloodhound unleased on a fresh trail.

A half hour's walk brought him to a modest cottage, badly in need of paint, set in the midst of a small but well-kept lawn. He ascended the steps and rang the bell. An interval of impatient waiting, then the door opened a crack.

"Oh, Harry!" a feminine voice exclaimed. "What ever made you come this time of day? I'm right in the middle of washing the dinner dishes."

"That's all right, dear. I can't stay but a few minutes, but I have somethiing to talk about to you."

"Why, what's the matter, Harry?" the Italian girl asked anxiously, quick to notice the submerged excitement in his voice.

"Nothing's the matter. I must talk about a business matter right away."

"All right. I'll run back and put on some other things; I'm a perfect fright now. I won't be but a minute. You come right into the parlor and sit down."

He waited until he could hear her footsteps no longer, then opened the door and entered a room. It was already occupied, much to his surprise. His fiancée's father, a prosperous fruit dealer, had evidently come home early from his place of business, for he was seated before the fire reading a newspaper. He looked up as Gregson entered and nodded surlily.

"Sit down," he growled. "She will be here soon."

Gregson accepted the invitation, placed his hat on a small table, and having nothing better to do, studied his companion.

John Bucaro was a large, obese man, probably fifty years of age, with a fat, expressionless face, slightly gray hair, dull black eyes, deep-set under black, bushy brows, and a scrawny black mustache drooped negligently around his mouth. He was a typical Sicilian.

In a few moments the daughter entered the neat little parlor. As is so often the case with people, Marie Bucaro was totally unlike her father. Unusually beautiful, of a pronounced brunette type like her mother, she was a young woman that any man might have been proud to have as his wife. Gregson proceeded straight to the point of his unexpected visit.

"Marie, you have read about the murder of Judge Dowling and District Attorney Ray, haven't you?"

She nodded, and an expression of anxiety spread over her face. What was he going to say? Why was he questioning her on a subject in which, so far as he knew, she had no interest whatsoever?

"We know who did it," he added sharply.

Marie's heart pounded hard and her father rattled his paper nervously.

"Well?" she asked.

"We don't exactly know the *persons* who committed these murders, but we know which organization was behind it. Now I——"

"But why come to tell me about it?" and there was a certain asperity in her voice that he had never heard there before.

"Because it concerns you," he replied.

For a moment it seemed as if she could not get her breath. Then she forced a faint, quivering smile.

"I don't see how it could possibly concern me."

"It concerns you in this way: I have been ordered by Chief Fogarty to get the head of this vendetta gang, dead or alive, and I'm not going to stop till I *do* get him." He spoke with an earnest emphasis that made his words stand out like raised type for the blind.

Marie's eyes dilated with horror. She did her best to mask her agitation, but there was an ill-concealed tremor in her voice as she replied:

"Yes, Harry, I know you'll get your man, but I still fail to see how it concerns me."

"No, I suppose not." He spoke petulantly. "It wouldn't concern you a bit if I were killed."

She laughed nervously.

"Now, dear, don't be silly. You know there's nothing I'd hate as bad as that. I really believe I'd die of grief if anything happened to you." She spoke with an intense earnestness that was most satisfying to Gregson. "I do wish you'd give up your work with the department and take something that—even if less enjoyable for you—would be easier on me. When I think of the places you go and the people you have to deal with, I nearly go into hysterics."

He took her hand and patted it affectionately.

"No, Marie, I was just teasing you. I know you'd care if I were killed, and if something should happen to you I wouldn't care to live any longer. Maybe I will give up detective work, but I must finish this case first. And that reminds me that I haven't told you why you should be interested so very much in this particular case. The Chamber of Commerce has offered a reward of two thousand dollars for the capture of the head of this gang, dead or alive. If I win that reward we can be married at once and fix up a nice little home. Now, I guess *that* concerns you, doesn't it?"

"It certainly does," she agreed.

It did—in more ways than he knew.

"Now what I want you to do," continued Gregson, "is to tell me everything that your friends may have said that might give me a clue to the identity of the president of that gang and where I can find him."

Marie laughed mirthlessly in an attempt to appear unconcerned.

"Why, Harry, how should I know anything about such a terrible person?" Her words were sincere, but her voice quivered with suppressed emotion.

"Do you know anything about this vendetta chief, Mr. Bucaro?" asked Gregson, turning to that individual.

Bucaro glowered savagely over his newspaper.

"No," he growled sullenly. "I know not'ing 'bout dat. I tenda my own business. Police, dey always try get my fren's in trouble."

With a savage shake of his head he went back to his newspaper. But notwithstanding his disavowal of any knowledge of the association, his face was strangely white and his beady black eyes glittered menacingly as those of a rattlesnake about to strike.

Marie rose and put her hands to her head. She was trembling violently.

"I'm not feeling well to-day," she said slowly. "I think I'll lie down for a while."

"All right, dear, do it," answered Gregson. "Now, don't worry about this thing. It will come out all right in the end. I'm coming back this evening to see how you are. In the meantime I must work on getting my man, for that two thousand will mean an awful lot to us." He picked up his hat and opened the door. "Take care of yourself, dear, and don't worry. I'll be back around six."

"I'll do the best I can," she promised with a wan smile; then, as the door closed behind him, she fell across the sofa in a faint.

Her nerves had snapped under a severe strain. Bucaro jumped to his feet with an oath.

When Marie regained consciousness her father was standing over her with a glass of water in his hand. Her face was wet.

"Oh, father!" she exclaimed. "I'm so afraid they're going to get you."

"No, dey won't," he growled fiercely, "'cause I get dem first."

"But you mustn't do anything to Harry."

"Harry," he grunted contemptuously, "would you radder have him or your fader, eh?"

Marie burst into a torrent of hysterical weeping.

"Oh, father," she moaned, "I don't know what to do."

"You stay here and rest," he commanded. "I'm going downtown. I be back after while, den we talk some more." He patted her on the shoulder, while a sickly smile overspread his bloated, ashen face. "Don't you worry 'bout it no more, 'cause I fix everyt'ing all right."

Marie tried to smile through her tears, and Bucaro strode out of the house with her final warning ringing in his ears:

"Do be careful. I know I'd die if anything happened to you."

Alone in the house, Marie got up after a while and made some coffee. As she sat in the neat little kitchen, drinking the steaming stimulant, the trying events of the past hour rushed through her mind. Did Gregson suspect the truth? She was sure he did not. Where had her father gone? To see some of his friends, probably. Then a thought rushed into her brain—a terrifying thought that nearly sent her into a state of collapse. *Maybe he had gone to plot against Gregson.* He knew that the young detective was to return to their home that evening. Suppose he should concoct a plot to kill him in the house. She screamed involuntarily at the thought. If she could only telephone him, make him promise to not come near the house. But where could she find him? There was no possible way of reaching Gregson.

Totally unaware of the harrowing thoughts seething through his fiancée's mind, Harry Gregson hurried blithely on his way. He wondered, though, why she had been so excited over this case, but easily quenched any misgiving he may have had by assuring himself that it was her anxiety for his safety that had caused her agitation.

As he reached Canal street, walking briskly, a uniformed patrolman hailed him, asking:

"You're Detective Gregson, aren't you?"

"I certainly am. What's wanted?"

"The chief sent out an all-station message, about ten minutes ago, for you to report to him at headquarters."

"Whew!" whistled Gregson in surprise. "Must be something important." He thanked the patrolman and hurried toward police headquarters, five blocks away.

There he found Fogarty seated in his private office, chewing nervously on a fat, black cigar, an expression of grim expectancy on his face. Gregson knew that look—the chief had found out something relating to the murder gang.

"O'Malley, at Canal and Robertson streets, said you had sent out a message for me to report here," said the detective.

"I got hold of a fine clue a little while ago, and wanted to let you know about it. Neson, our penmanship expert, has identified the handwriting in that note I got."

"If he really has it'll save me a lot of work. Who is it?"

"Jake Bucaro, the fruit man."

Gregson leaped to his feet, and an oath escaped his lips before he could check it.

"It can't be," he pleaded. "Why, I was talking to him less than thirty minutes ago."

"You'll be talking to him again before long," retorted Fogarty with grim humor. "But it sure is his handwriting. I'll have Neson show you himself." He scribbled a few lines on a sheet of paper and pressed a button at the edge of his desk.

"Give this to Sergeant Neson," he ordered the uniformed clerk who answered.

Sergeant Neson answered the imperative summons, carrying a black leather portfolio. He was a wizened, stoop-shouldered old man with a thin, sharp face, gray hair and

deep blue eyes that shot a glance like twin daggers.

"You know Detective Gregson of course, sergeant," began Fogarty. "He's working on this murder case; in fact, he's the best man I've got on it. I was just telling him of your identification of the handwriting in that note, and he seemed so surprised that I thought it would be better if you explained the matter to him yourself."

"Oh, it's as plain as can be, sir," said Neson hastily in a thin, dry voice. "I've studied fingerprints and penmanship for years, and I believe I am an expert at both if I might be permitted to say so. There's no doubt whatever about it in my mind." He extracted an envelope from his portfolio and handed it to the detective.

Gregson accepted it rather unwillingly and examined the letter it contained. It was a personal note of Bucaro's to a friend, and was written in their mother tongue. He could not imagine how the department had got hold of it, but there it was nevertheless, and "it's results that count."

"Now, chief," continued Neson, "if you will kindly give me that note, I will explain the matter thoroughly to Mr. Gregson."

Then for the next fifteen minutes the sergeant compared the two specimens of penmanship scientifically, comparing the little lines and curves and individual characteristics that, even though the handwriting be disguised, are ever present to the eye of the expert. The explanation left Gregson in a state of dazed bewilderment, but convinced that Neson was right.

"Now, Gregson," said Fogarty briskly as Neson left the room, "the next thing is to get Bucaro down here for a grilling. You can bring him by yourself, can't you?"

The detective nodded dumbly and got to his feet.

"This will nearly kill Marie," he said huskily.

"Who's Marie?"

"My fiancée, Bucaro's daughter."

The chief gasped.

"Bucaro's daughter your fiancée! No wonder you didn't want to believe him guilty. But wait, I'll send somebody else to make the arrest. It isn't fair to ask you to do it."

Gregson raised a hand wearily in protest.

"No," he answered. "Much obliged to you, chief, but I'd rather do it myself. I'll make some kind of an explanation to Marie that'll make it easier on her. Tell her that we're just bringing him down here for an examination or something like that." His face brightened. "You know, chief, that charge might not be true, because we really haven't got a clear case on Bucaro yet."

"Yes, that's so," assented Fogarty. But deep in his heart he knew that with the clues already in his possession it would not be a very difficult matter to prove Bucaro guilty. "Bring him down here for a grilling, anyway, and if he isn't guilty he'll tell who is before he'll go to the chair."

Gregson brightened up perceptibly at this and left the office with almost his accustomed brisk step. He walked to his destination in order to have more time to collect his thoughts, plan the arrest and make up the explanation he would give Marie. By the time he walked into the neat little yard and mounted the steps he had everything planned to his satisfaction.

Marie herself answered his knock. Her eyes were red, as if from prolonged weeping, and her face was white and drawn. Her heart fluttered with a vague terror as an infallible feminine intuition told her that tragedy, grim and terrible, was lurking close at hand.

"What do you want here, Harry?" she demanded almost defiantly.

"Why, Marie," he remonstrated in a tone one would use to a pouty child, "haven't I a right to call?"

Her eyes filled with tears, and a wearied, despondent look flashed across her features.

"Yes, Harry, of course you have, but please go away now."

"Why?"

"Oh, I don't know, I don't know. But—I'm so frightened. Please—*please* go away."

"You're just nervous to-day, dear," said Gregson kindly. "Rest yourself for a day

or two, and you'll be all right again." He did not speak until he had himself under perfect control. Then he asked: "Is your father at home?"

"Oh, you're going to arrest him; I know you are," she exclaimed fearfully.

"No, I'm not," he answered gently. "The chief just wants to ask him some questions, and as I was coming out here anyway to see you, Fogarty said I might as well bring him back with me. So if you'll tell him now, we'll be on our way."

"All right, I'll tell him," and she left the room.

Gregson, left alone, lit a cigarette and tried to make himself comfortable. But disquieting thoughts kept rushing through his mind—terrible thoughts that battered at his reason. What would she do when her father was convicted, as he undoubtedly would be? And how would she feel towards *him?* He thanked God that it had been some one else who had discovered the important clue which would be the basis of the state's case against Bucaro.

Marie returned in a few moments, carrying a tray upon which rested two glasses of lemonade, as was her custom when Gregson was there.

"Father will be here in a minute," she said slowly as she sat down on the sofa beside the detective. He noticed a tremor in her voice, but of course she was worried and excited over her father being called to police headquarters for an examination.

"Here's some lemonade I made," she continued. "Won't you have some?" She handed him a glass and took the other herself.

As he raised his glass to his lips Gregson saw her face contort with an expression of ghastly terror.

"Oh, I can't do it!" she screamed, and she knocked the glass out of his hand. It fell crashing to the floor, splintering into fragments, while the lemonade splashed over the gaudy rug. Gregson looked up, a question for her action in his eyes.

"Poisoned!" she hissed. "Father wanted me to kill you, but I couldn't do it." She burst into a torrent of weeping.

There was a hoarse bellow of rage behind them. Gregson leaped to his feet and turned around. Bucaro was standing in the doorway, a revolver in his right hand. His little black eyes gleamed, and there was an expression of terrible, unreasoning rage on his flushed and bloated face.

"You dam' fool!" he exploded. "You no try save your fader, eh? I wish I kill dat cop long ago, but I do it now." He raised his revolver and took aim.

Like a flash the detective jerked Marie behind him, sheltering her with his own body, and reached for his own revolver. But it was too late. Bucaro's weapon spat fire, and Gregson felt a sharp, searing pain tear through his chest, and he fell to the floor. Again the enraged man's revolver spoke. Marie screamed and fell, while a spot of crimson on the front of her white waist rapidly grew larger. Bucaro stood in the doorway surveying his horrible handiwork. Then he dropped his revolver and passed his hand across his eyes, as if unable to believe what he saw. That moment was fatal for him. It had given Gregson time to get out his gun. As Bucaro turned to leave the room the detective took quick aim and fired twice. Without a sound the man crumpled up, his body seeming to shrink, and he went down with a crash.

In spite of the terrible pains in his chest Gregson smiled. Then he dragged his tortured body across the floor to where the Italian lay. He felt for the man's heart and pulse, but they were stilled forever. Jake Bucaro, the vendetta leader, was dead. Gregson smiled again. He had fulfilled the commission from his chief, been faithful to his duty to the last, and he was supremely happy.

Then back across the floor he crawled to his wounded mate. Marie was gasping feebly.

"I feel myself going," she whispered. "Good-by!"

"Not good-by," he protested weakly. "This is only the beginning of our existence together."

With his last remaining strength the detective seized her hand and kissed her. Then everything grew black before his eyes, and he sank into merciful unconsciousness.

French Spies

IN the early days of the world war I was selected by our government to perform a certain mission in France. I had traveled all over that country, could speak French like a native, and my department honored me enough to believe in my wisdom and discretion. This mission was connected with the attitude of France toward America.

When I landed in Havre I was surrounded with all the safeguards one could ask for. I had my certificate of American citizenship, a passport, a letter to the American minister, and my movements were to be controlled from his headquarters. My departure from Washington was known to less than half a dozen officials. There were Frenchmen among my fellow-passengers, but I had been very discreet. I may have been overcautious. It may have been for this very reason that I was "spotted" as soon as I walked down the gangplank, for spotted I was. I had been engaged in detective and secret service work long enough to pick up a good many pointers. I had shadowed men, and I knew how to detect a shadow on my own trail. As I walked from the plank to a hack I felt that I was an object of solicitude to some one in the crowd. I could not pick him out, but I knew he was there.

I did not purpose going to Paris for several days. I drove to a hotel, registered plainly and correctly, and went to my room. Almost immediately I descended again, to find a spy and the clerk with their heads together over the book, and I heard my name mentioned. The spy was a slim, spare man of thirty, well-dressed, black hair and eyes, and carried a cane. I knew from his ways that he was not a detective connected with the regular police, and if so he must be a political spy. I returned to my room without being seen, and half an hour later had a call from the man.

"I beg a thousad pardons, monsieur, but you just arrived by steamer?" he asked.

"I did."

"I had friends, relatives, two sisters, who were to sail by her from New York. They have not arrived. I am very anxious. Perhaps you met them?"

"What is the name?"

"Dubois, monsieur."

"Ah, yes. Well, I have sad news for you. They were swept overboard and drowned on the third day out."

He threw up his hands, uttered a sort of shriek, and fled down the corridor. He had simply come to make sure that I was an American, and to get a closer look at me. His sisters were myths, and I gave him the lie because I knew that such was the case. We landed before noon. After dinner I took a walk about, and I hadn't gone four squares before I tumbled to the fact that I was shadowed. My spy had changed his hat and coat and donned a red wig, but I knew him by his gait and build. Men can disguise their faces and bodies, and draw on gloves to hide scars on their hands, but no living man can long disguise his gait. He may limp, toe out, toe in, or make any other change, but he will unconsciously relapse into his old gait after a few minutes. I gave the fellow no attention, and after a little he grew bold enough to almost walk beside me. I was out for a couple of hours, and he shadowed me back to the hotel. That evening I went to the theatre, and he had a seat not far away.

After breakfast next morning I received a visit from the spy's superior. If I remember right, he said he was chief of some division acting under orders from Paris. He politely asked for my passport, and I

not only gave him that, but some letters which seemed to open his eyes very wide.

"Oh, yes—certainly—excuse — excuse!" he hastened to say. "Monsieur is a prominent American, of course. I am very sorry, and hope you have not been inconvenienced."

He went away seemingly satisfied, but when I went out for a drive the spy took up my trail again. When I went out after dinner it was on foot, and the man had now become very bold. He must have argued that I could not remember his voice nor penetrate his disguise, for, as I sauntered down towards the quays, he overtook me and said in French:

"Well, Julius, what brings you here?"

"I think you have made a mistake," I replied in English.

"Ah! so I have; a thousand pardons!" he exclaimed as he lifted his hat and bowed. "You closely resemble a valued friend of mine, and I was so sure of his identity, you know. You are English, monsieur, one from England?"

"Well?"

"I like the English. My mother was an Englishwoman. Are you seeing the sights?"

"Yes, trying to."

"They are not grand, monsieur, but it is a pleasant place. Has monsieur been long from London?"

"Only a few days."

"Ah! And monsieur can only speak English? It is too bad."

"Yes, so it is."

I understood that his object was to find out something about me, and that it did him lots of good to have me tacitly admit that I was an Englishman when he knew better. I could speak French and he knew it, but he encouraged me to deny it. In this way he could make me out a suspicious character. He was with me for two hours, and we seemed to part with regret. That evening as I walked out he followed me in a new disguise. He lost sight of me only as I slept, until I took the train for Paris. At Rouen we had a delay of half an hour owing to accident, and a second spy took me in charge. He was got up as a shopkeeper on his way to Paris on business, and he addressed me in French, and I answered him promptly enough. I felt sure of his identity, and as we rode together he exhibited the despicable side of character for which political spies were notorious. He had discovered that I was an American traveling for pleasure.

"Ah! how glorious to live in a republic where the masses reign!" he exclaimed. "The Americans are right to detest monarchy. Monarchy is corruption and oppression."

"Some people don't seem to think so."

He was delighted at my expression. That was "information" for which he would get credit with his chief. He entered Paris with me, drove to the same hotel, and as soon as I had gone to my room he disappeared. Two hours later a very genteel-looking man paid me a visit and introduced himself as an official of the Bureau of Public Safety. I was a foreigner. It was his duty to inspect my papers.

"Monsieur is English, I believe, and from London?" he queried.

"No. I am an American, from New York."

"So! Does monsieur travel for pleasure?"

"Oh, no. I am in France to buy chestnuts for the American army."

"Chestnuts for soldiers?" he queried. "That is strange. Monsieur speaks French?"

"Sorry to say that my French is a failure."

"Ah, so! I will look at the papers."

They were papers, as I have said, that no official would dare question, and, after looking them over, he bowed very low and inquired:

"Will monsieur remain long in France?"

"That will depend on the state of the chestnut market," I replied.

During the day I called upon the Secretary of Legation for consultation, and when I told him of the spies, he said that every American in the country was under surveillance to a greater or less degree. The war was exciting the French people and making them restless, and the political police had

been doubled in number. Suspects were arrested and imprisoned in the most arbitrary manner, and no one felt that he could trust any one outside his own family.

I was to go from Paris to Rheims. Spies had followed me everywhere in Paris, and I planned to get out of the city without being shadowed. The clerk at the hotel office hoped I would give him a day's notice of my intended departure. He wanted to inform the spies, but I determined to beat him. I ate my dinner as usual, went out for a stroll, and when I returned I rushed for a valise, already prepared, demanded my bill on the instant, and was out of the house in ten minutes, pleading a case of life or death. I went on foot for three squares, engaged a cab to take me to the station from which I could depart for Versailles, and as soon as he had put me down and departed I walked away and engaged another vehicle to convey me to the right depot. We arrived ten minutes before the departure of the train, and I purchased my ticket and got away with the rush. As I came to know subsequently, there was a great row raised over my departure. Spies were sent out by the dozen, telegrams dispatched by the score, and I arrived at Rheims to find a crowd of no less than six officials waiting to arrest me. It was not exactly an arrest, either. As I left the train an official touched me on the arm and respectfully said:

"Monsieur the American will oblige me?"

"If possible," I replied, knowing well what was coming."

"Then monsieur will accompany me in my carriage to make a call at headquarters."

Two carriages followed us, and after a drive of a mile we drew up at the headquarters of the Bureau of Public Safety in Rheims. It was a misnomer. It should have been called the Bureau of Public Peril, for the arbitrary measures of this department were making fresh enemies every hour in the day. The chief was a very pompous and dignified man. He received me politely, but coldly, and the first question asked was:

"Is monsieur guilty of some crime that he leaves Paris so secretly?"

"I left when I got ready, and after my own fashion. Here are my papers. Examine them and satisfy yourself."

He looked them over. No official in France dared dispute them or put me under arrest after seeing them.

"But why did monsieur claim to be an Englishman?" he asked.

"I never did."

"So! But you speak French, and yet you denied it."

"I never denied it."

"But you say you want chestnuts for American soldiers. What do they do with them?"

"Make soup, of course."

"Oh! That is different. It must be good soup. You evaded the truth."

"That was to please one of your political spies."

"Spies! Have we spies?"

"Thousands, sir. They are at every station and every hotel and café, on the steamboats, in the omnibus, in the theatre and church. They have dogged me since I landed. You had better search my hindpockets and see if I have a revolver with me."

They looked puzzled, and, after a consultation, I was bowed out of headquarters and sent in a carriage to a hotel. Twice afterward, at Amiens and Lille, I was brought up in the same way and sent off after examination; and during my three months' stay in the country there was never a day that I was not under surveillance and suspicion.

I departed before the bombardment of Rheims began and was glad to get safely back to America with my mission accomplished.

Some Unusual Crimes

By CARL H. GETZ

A MAN walked into a bank in California and handed an officer of the bank, who had a desk near the entrance, a check on which were written these words:

"I have an automatic revolver in my pocket and it is pointed at you. Do as I tell you."

The bank officer's face turned white. He turned and looked helplessly at the crook.

"Take this check to the teller's window and tell him it is all right," commanded the crook, and he handed the officer a check for $2,000.

The officer arose and did as he was told. He turned the money over to the crook, who next commanded:

"Now get your hat and come with me."

The crook followed the officer into the coat-room, saw him take his hat from a hook and put it on. Still trembling, the officer looked at the crook.

"Walk directly ahead of me, go out of the bank and turn to your right and do not look back."

The officer did as he was commanded. But after he had walked fifty feet he turned around. The crook had disappeared.

Now this story sounds incredible, but it is an actual case.

The crook succeeded in this instance, but when he tried it again he had a different experience. The next time the cashier walked to a teller's window, asked for a pen and then, as if to O. K. the check, added these words:

"This man is a crook. For God's sake do something."

The officer of the bank told the cashier the check was good, but the cashier said he didn't have that much money in the cage and would have to leave it to get the required sum. The minute he left the cage the crook became suspicious. The teller went direct to the guards at the front of the bank, talked with them a moment and they immediately began to close in on the crook. They had no difficulty catching him. When he was arrested it was found he was not armed.

Here's another interesting case:

A man walked into a bank in Toronto, went up to a teller's window and handed in a check which read:

"I have a revolver in my pocket which is aimed at you. Hand me out $1,000 and don't dare make a false move."

The teller said he didn't have that much money. The crook said he would take what he had. The teller reached over to one side as if to get some money, but instead ducked beneath the counter and pressed the alarm button. The crook was caught.

That incident taught the bank to put the alarm button on the floor instead of under the counter. The moment a teller tried to reach under the counter the crook became suspicious. But the crook would be unable to see any button on the floor.

Several New York banks have alarm buttons on the floor and which are so connected that a press of the button automatically closes the front doors and a great siren shrieks its warning.

Here is another example of unusual crime:

There is an old bank in a certain section of the East Side of New York that has an old-fashioned four-cornered cage in the center of the bank. To get into this cage it is necessary only to lift up the counter and walk in. One day a crook went to this bank, gave his coat and hat to a confederate standing on the outside, walked into

the bank with his hands full of letters, walked into the cage and picked up $14,450 in bonds. Two tellers within the cage saw all this, but only one did anything. And all he did was to say:

"Hey, where are you going with those bonds?"

Instead of answering, the crook walked out of the cage, out of the bank and in a few minutes had disappeared. At the time of this writing he has not been caught.

Here is one of the most unusual forgery cases the bank operatives have ever had to contend with:

A crook posing as a safety ink salesman walked into a store, asked for a check for $1 and of course was refused.

"Write out a check for $1," he repeated. "I want to show you the chances you are taking in using ordinary ink."

After further argument the check was written out and the salesman promptly proceeded to use ink eradicator, removed "one dollar" and raised the check to $100.

"Now that is the chance you take in using ordinary ink," said the salesman. "Now try my ink."

And the merchant proceeds to write another check for $1, this time using the safety ink.

"Now try to remove that ink with the eradicator," suggested the "salesman."

The merchant did so and of course had no success.

"Now that's protection," said the salesman. "A big bottle of this ink will cost you $1."

Partly convinced and partly because he wanted to get rid of the man, the merchant pulled a dollar bill out of his pocket. Then the crook pulled out a roll of bills that only a pelican could carry in its mouth and made this comment:

"I've been selling safety ink all day. It is after banking hours. Would you mind giving me a check? And just to play safe, use my ink."

And the merchant gave the crook a good check for $1.

A month later this merchant discovered a check for $100.

"That's funny," he said. "My check was for $1."

Well, the crook had neglected to tell the merchant that ordinary soap and water would remove his ink. The crook took $7,800 out of one town in one week selling "safety" ink.

Here is another unusual forgery case:

A man called at a certain automobile agency in a certain little aristocratic town on Long Island, and said that he wanted to give a certain make of car to his wife for a birthday present, but he was not sure whether he could afford to buy such a car. However, he explained to the salesman, that he would be grateful if the fine points of the car could be pointed out to him. The salesman spent an hour doing so.

"I'm sold on this car," said the man. "It is only a question of whether I think I can afford as good a car. However, I will be back Tuesday and give my decision. My wife's birthday is Saturday."

Tuesday the man came back and said he had decided to buy the car.

"My name is Mister Frank L. Jennings," he said. "I live on Belmont Road just the other side of Bayview. I want you to come to my home at 10 o'clock Saturday morning with this car and I want you to pretend that you have never met me. I want you to ask for me and then explain that you have a car for me. I will tell you that it is all a mistake. You see, I want to fool my wife. And then when she isn't looking I will give you a certified check for the full amount."

"Very well," said the salesman. "I will be there."

And he was there. And "Mr. and Mrs. Jennings" were there, too. Both were sitting on the front porch of a very beautiful home. "Mr. Jennings" was in his coat sleeves and "Mrs. Jennings" had on a housedress.

"Good morning," said the salesman. "Is this the residence of Mister Frank L. Jennings?"

"Yes," said "Mr. Jennings."

"Well, I have a car here for Mrs. Jennings," continued the auto man.

"You have what?" asked "Mr. Jennings."

"I said I have a car for Mrs. Jennings," repeated the salesman.

"Some mistake," said "Mr. Jennings." "I'm not buying any cars these days."

"Aren't you Mister Frank L. Jennings?" asked the salesman.

"Yes," came the reply.

"Well, this car is for Mrs. Jennings and you might as well come and get it," said the salesman.

Just then "Mrs. Jennings" spoke up:

"Frank, I see through all this. You are going to give me an automobile for my birthday," she said.

"Give you an automobile?" cried "Mr. Jennings." "I should say not!"

But "Mrs. Jennings" was satisfied she was going to have a new car, so she threw her arms around her husband and hugged and kissed him. And while she was doing it "Mr. Jennings" winked at the salesman.

"Well, let's take a look at this car," said "Mr. Jennings." "It's a funny world. I don't know any one who likes us well enough to give us an automobile."

"Now, Frank," said "Mrs. Jennings," who walked on ahead of the salesman and "Mr. Jennings," "stop fooling me."

While "Mrs. Jennings" was not looking the salesman was handed a certified check for the full amount. The check was written on a certain type of safety paper and with a check protector. The salesman looked at it and then nodded his approval to "Mr. Jennings."

"Well, I must be off," said the salesman. "Hope you like your car."

"Well, can you beat it?" "Mrs. Jennings" was heard to say.

A few minutes later "Mr. and Mrs. Jennings" went to the back of the house and picked up their hats and Mr. Jenning's coat where they had left them. They put these on, got into the car and drove away.

A few days later the auto representative received the interesting information that the check he had received from "Mr. Jennings" was incorrect. That in bank language means forgery. The auto agent hurried to the little town and to the Jennings home. He rang the bell several times, but there was no answer.

"That's funny," he said to himself and all the time getting more and more uneasy.

Then he went into the town, strode into a cigar store and asked whether the man knew Mr. Frank L. Jennings.

"Sure do," said the clerk.

"Good family?" asked the auto man.

"Best in the world," said the clerk.

"That's funny," said the auto salesman. "You see I sold a car to Mister Jennings the——"

"You did what?" asked the clerk.

And the salesman repeated his remark.

"Why, Mister Jennings has been in Europe four months," said the clerk.

Whereupon the salesman saw how two clever crooks had learned about this home being unoccupied and how they had posed as owners of it. The car was never recovered.

Here is another unusual crime that bank operatives were called upon to handle recently:

There is a certain bank in a suburb of New York which still hangs on to an old seven-foot safe. Not long ago yeggs broke into this bank and with the aid of an oxy-acetylene torch burned a hole through the door. They then encountered a second door which they also cut through. But then they discovered that they couldn't reach to the bottom of the safe. With the aid of a mirror and an electric flash they were able to see the bundles of currency in the bottom of the safe. They used a poker and a long wire in an attempt to hook the money out. But they failed. Then they hit upon this idea: One of the men got a hose and soon filled the safe with water. While he was doing that the other grabbed the money as it floated out. The men had previously succeeded in breaking the bands on the bundles of currency.

Chicago police were called upon to combat an unusual crook lately. This man owned a dart made of an ice-pick which he shot into teller's cages and fished out money. He was remarkably proficient and had succeeded in stealing nearly $4,000 when he was caught.

Boston bank operatives were asked to solve an unusual bank robbery. A safe had

been blown and it looked very much as if the safe had been blown from the inside out. Working on the theory that it was an inside job the operatives got their man.

A certain Pennsylvania city recently had a safe deposit robbery. Such a crime is very unusual and of course such crimes are never given any publicity because the news of a single robbery would immediately injure the company's business. Operatives assigned to the case were satisfied it was an inside job and they were satisfied, too, who their man was, but the officers of the bank ridiculed the suggestion that this particular employee was guilty. Finally an operative from New York was assigned to the case. He was given no information about what the other detectives had learned and he made an entirely independent investigation and came to the same conclusion that the others had. The result was that it was decided to shadow this man constantly. The suspect got very angry and threatened to shoot one of the shadowers. He was told to go ahead. But he did nothing.

Everywhere this bank officer went he was followed. When he was at home there was a man outside watching his house. When he was at the bank there was a man there waiting for him. This continued until the suspect was completely unnerved. Finally the president of the bank asked the operatives to discontinue the case. They did so, but the police took it up where they had left off. The result was that the man's spirit was completely broken and he confessed his guilt. Up to this time there was no positive evidence against him.

The unusual crimes in this country cannot compare with the unusual crimes of continental Europe. Not long ago the police of Berlin captured a man who carried a gas generator in a handbag. This man made it a practice to open the window of a home, set his generator inside and a few moments later, after the occupants of the house were completely under the influence of the gas, he would enter the house, ransack it, take what he wanted and depart.

The police of Athens were called upon not long ago to capture a gang of men known as wall breakers. These men, instead of going through the doors or windows, cut holes into the walls of the homes or buildings and walked in.

The Paris police recently arrested a man who carried a sword encased in a walking-stick. This man had an obsession for seeing people cut and he committed many serious crimes before he was caught.

The London police have learned several lessons from the war. One is the use of tear bombs. These have been used to break up mobs and they have also been used to protect loft buildings. These bombs are adjusted each night in such a way that any one opening a door would explode a bomb. And of course that person is knocked out. The bombs have proved remarkably effective.

A similar type of bomb was used in New York recently and one night the watchman of a building where these bombs had been installed forgot to lock a certain door. That night when a policeman tried the door the bomb exploded and of course the policeman collapsed. The alarm was given and a few minutes later a squad of police rushed into the building. All they found was a policeman who was a mighty angry officer when he came to some time later.

It is generally agreed that the crook is a versatile individual. He manages to keep a jump or two ahead of the police until the police miss a few steps and get ahead of him. Then he loses.

The person who goes to some of our great prisons and is told about the crimes which resulted in the different men being confined will be amazed to find so many unusual crimes. Of course there are larceny and forgery and crimes against body, but when the details of the crimes are revealed it will be learned that many are unusual.

But a study of unusual crimes teaches the same story all crimes teach. And that lesson is that all crime is futile.

Criminologists and psychologists for years have been trying to determine just why it is that the criminal who exercises ingenuity to commit crime, when caught, convicted and confined, continues to manifest a pride in his craft. Just what kind of a

mind it is that takes pride in criminal artistry is difficult to comprehend. But such minds are common to the student of crime.

A captain of detectives in a certain city in the West has devoted several years of his life to unusual crime, and to unusual means of detecting crime. This man has a mirror attached to his desk which is so fixed that any one sitting down to talk to the captain immediately finds himself staring at himself in this mirror. If the man makes an effort to move his chair away the captain is able by the use of a lever under his desk to adjust the mirror so that the suspect cannot escape it.

This captain has the theory that if a man has two things to think about rather than one, that it will be much easier to trip him up. He contends that when a man finds himself looking into a mirror his train of thought is immediately broken up. Then, too, the suspect who fails to tell the truth will unconsciously look into the mirror to see whether his failure to tell the truth can be detected by a glance at his face.

This captain has had remarkable success in getting information out of suspects. He illustrates what can be done, even in a small town, by a serious consideration of the subject of crime and criminals.

He proceeds on the basis that crime is unusual, and therefore has adopted unusual methods to combat crime.

A $75,000 DOLLAR BANK THEFT

THE theft of $75,000 from the Chatham and Phenix National Bank, Broadway and Eighteenth street, New York, was revealed by Federal authorities after Leonard S. Myles, 146 East Ninety-fifth street, had been released in bail of $5,000 on a charge of participating in the robbery. The other men implicated are Charles Bernstein, former bookkeeper in the bank; Louis Feldman, 1417 Grand Concourse, The Bronx, alleged race track bookmaker; William Perlman, 16 West 111th street, former paying teller in the Bank of the United States, and Harry B. Bachrach, Washington lawyer.

Bernstein, alleged manipulator of the theft, with Perlman and Feldman, was arrested in Chicago and returned here. The arrest of the trio was kept secret pending the apprehension of the others. Bernstein's bail was fixed at $10,000. Feldman and Perlman were released in bail of $3,500 each.

Theft of the money took place during July and August, 1922, Department of Justice operatives said. Bernstein, as bookkeeper in the victimized institution is alleged to have taken spurious checks from the others. The alleged accomplices deposited in their own banks ficticious checks which through prearrangement went through the Clearing House for collection at the Chatham and Phenix National Bank in regular form.

The checks purported to be drawn by regular depositors, according to John E. Joyce, Assistant United States Attorney. Bernstein knew, he said, that if the checks went back canceled to the legitimate concerns on which they were drawn the deception would be discovered quickly.

Instead of allowing this to occur, Bernstein is alleged to have charged the amounts off on other accounts and destroyed the fraudulent vouchers. He then would change the figures in the accounts of depositors from which he had taken the money so that when clients had their pass books balanced the correct amounts would be shown to their credit, it is charged.

"The scheme employed by Bernstein and his partners," said Mr. Joyce, "eventually had to be discovered. Bernstein's conscience troubled him and he could not reconcile himself to the continuous juggling of figures. That's why he fled. The spurious checks deposited in other banks by his accomplices always were drawn on accounts Bernstein had to keep books on. In that way, he guarded against any of the fraudulent vouchers going to honest employees in the bookkeeping department."

Vanishing Sparks

By JAMES W. EGAN

DETECTIVE BOB DRYDEN dropped into the Pullman seat across from a solitary young man. Somewhat quizzically he eyed him. Despite the other's new and well-tailored clothing there was a certain colorlessness of complexion and peculiarity of hair trim that betrayed him.

Aware of it, the young man defiantly returned Dryden's glance. The latter smiled, not unkindly, and said:

"Well, Curt, I see you're out?"

"Yes, I've done my stretch. Five pleasant years there in Walla Walla, Bob. I'm heading home and going straight from now on."

"Of course." Dryden nodded, smiling still.

"I mean it, Bob! There's a girl in Cleveland. She has waited longer than five years, bless her! Even if I hadn't learned my little lesson, for her sake I'd—well, I'm going to be good. Don't believe me, eh?"

"Didn't say I didn't, Curt."

"A dick has no faith in an ex-convict. We aren't to be trusted, you know. But I'd be a fool not to go straight. Fortunately I have something to begin on. My uncle died while I was in the big pen and was good enough to leave me his few hundred dollars. I'm on my feet. I have a start. Most of us fail to get that."

The detective nodded and answered:

"Don't think too bitterly of dicks, Curt. That's a mistake. Naturally an officer is more or less distrustful. His profession makes him that way. There are some hard ones among us, yet I think the majority are human. I for one would like to see you make good now, Curt. You have my best wishes."

"Thank you, Bob. I shouldn't have said what I did, anyway—to you. I know you always were a white guy and on the square. Why are you traveling East? Taking somebody back to Portland?"

"I have been off the force in Portland for several years. Went back to my old love. I'm a railroad detective again. Have a good deal more territory to roam around in. Bound for Kansas City on a little business."

"Oh, you are with the railroad?"

"That's it. Years ago I used to work for the claim agent of this road—must have been fifteen years or more ago. I got tired of city police work. So you have a girl waiting for you, eh? Well, if she waited she's all right."

"You bet she is!" fervently expressed Curt Gilder. "It makes me sick to think of the way I carried on after leaving her and went West, where I got mixed up with that Falders gang. But she never gave me up."

"They don't." Dryden gazed out at the flying landscape. "That Falders gang was bad, Curt. Spark thieves, weren't they?"

"Yes," shortly. "It was for that big jewel robbery of Morrison, the shipbuilder, that they got me. They sure soaked me hard, too. But I'm done now. I'm wiser. Never again, Bob!"

"Stick to that, my friend. Remember you're out with a fine chance. A little money and a faithful girl. You aren't so bad off."

"You're right." The young man's eyes

strayed through the Pullman. "I'm luckier than many a poor devil. Think of being in the shape of that unlucky mortal."

He indicated a berth at one end of the car where a woman in nurse's uniform was ministering to some one's wants.

"Invalid?" asked Dryden.

"Worse. Poor devil is paralyzed. Can only move his head a little, they say. I heard the nurse say he was being taken to relatives in Denver. They had a lot of trouble bringing him aboard at Portland. I'd want to die if I were like that!"

"Um!" and the railroad detective shook his head.

"Absolutely helpless. The nurse has to do everything for him. It must be terrible. I don't envy the nurse her job."

"No," Dryden agreed. "Hard on the woman. You would think he'd have a male nurse. But she's a capable-looking person, even if she isn't very pretty." The detective watched her for some moments without speaking. Then: "Paralyzed! Unable to move! Yes, you are better off by thousands of degrees than a man in such shape, Curt. Your sleeper isn't as crowded as mine. Hardly anybody in the car, is there?"

"Just that elderly couple and a fat lady with a lot of rings who has the lower berth across from me. Here she comes now."

A stout woman of middle age, expensively but vulgarly clothed, waddled down the aisle and moved into the section opposite the two men. She flashed them a suspicious look and then delved into her belongings.

"Oh, Mrs. Drusen!" she cooed, straightening up.

Two sections to the rear, one of the elderly couple Curt Gilder had mentioned put down her knitting and came to join the stout woman. Her husband, bald and meek, followed in the wake of his wife.

"I wanted to show you that bracelet I was telling you about—my poor husband's last gift," said the stout woman.

And suddenly she dangled before their eyes a magnificent circlet of diamonds and emeralds. Undeniably it was a bit of jewelry of great value.

"Why, that must be worth a fortune!" admired the elderly Mrs. Drusen.

Dumbly her husband nodded.

"Showing off!" muttered Curt Gilder, though his eyes had widened at sight of the jewelry. "Some nifty rocks, at that."

Just then the paralytic's nurse passed with a glass of water.

Bob Dryden frowned and muttered:

"The bracelet is worth too much to be carried so carelessly. The woman is vulgar. Her kind always lose their jewels. She ought to know better."

"Especially with an ex-convict across the aisle," bitterly commented Gilder. "That's a temptation, you know."

"Cut it, Curt!" snapped the officer. "I'm annoyed at such silliness. As for you, I guess you've had your fill of sparks."

"I'll say I have! Yet if anything should happen to that bracelet, I'll bet I would be blamed——"

"Nonsense!" cut in the detective. "Don't be so sour. I believe you've had your lesson."

The nurse passed them again.

"Aren't you afraid somebody will steal that ornament from you?" the bald Mr. Drusen queried. His eyes happened to wander to Curt Gilder and Dryden. The detective was quick to catch a momentary glint of recognition.

"He's recognized you, Curt," he said in a low tone. "The old fellow has seen you some place. He's giving the bejeweled creature an earful now."

"Telling her I'm an ex-convict, I'll bet, and that she'd better be awful careful of her valuables," gritted Gilder. "Wonder where he ever saw me?"

The stout lady was hurriedly putting away her glittering circlet.

"I get off at Denver," she said, "and I'm going to put it in a vault." She spoke quite loudly. "Of course you never can tell what will happen."

"The bald chap has scared her," chuckled Dryden. "Hope it spoils her rest to-night."

"Oh, she won't sleep well, with a dangerous neighbor like me across the aisle," said Gilder. "When does the train reach Denver? About noon to-morrow?"

"A little before. I'll be glad when she's gone with her trinket, won't you?"

"I will. It burns me up to be an object of distrust now, because—oh, I wish I were in Cleveland with Marie!"

"Forget it, old chap! All the unpleasant things will be wiped out when you see the little girl. Just think of the joy ahead. And now I'm going to run along and leave the lady and her gems at your mercy."

The smile of the railroad detective was so infectious that Gilder could not help returning it. The young man watched Detective Dryden retreat down the aisle, pause by the side of the paralytic and speak sympathetically to the nurse for a moment or two.

"Oh, he seems a white guy!" the ex-crook told himself. "Always did. But a dick is a dick. The best of 'em will jump at you if the least circumstance goes wrong. Darn that bracelet! It would be tough if she lost it now. I'd never see Marie!"

Angered by the thought, he scowled across the aisle at the stout lady and the Drusens. He wasn't surprised to note that all three were covertly studying him.

"A beast of prey! I ought to be in a cage!" he snapped under his breath.

The day dragged, as days are apt to on long trips, and Curt Gilder turned in soon after his berth was made up, later in the evening.

He arose early next morning, and was just returning from his toilette in the washroom when a piercing scream issued from the lower berth occupied by the stout lady. A premonition of danger swept over Curt Gilder.

"Porter! Porter! Get the conductor! I've been robbed!" came the lady's cries.

"Good God!" gasped Gilder, and he felt sick.

Every one in the sleeper tingled with excitement. The elderly Drusens were greatly disturbed, and the paralytic's nurse was aroused from a brief snatch of slumber. Soon the colored porter, frightened half out of his wits, managed to find the Pullman conductor.

And the ex-convict wished he were ten million miles away.

The stout, vulgar lady's costly bracelet was gone.

"I've been robbed!" she shrilled at the conductor. "And there is the robber! I know it! He's a convict!"

The excited woman pointed wrathfully at Gilder.

Although anticipating an accusation, the young man flared up.

"Madam, you are mistaken! I know nothing of your loss, and I won't have it saddled on me!" he discovered himself blurbing wrathfully.

"Find Bob Dryden!" commanded the Pullman official, speaking to the porter. "He's in car 22. Dryden's a detective for the railroad, and he'd better take charge. You think this young man——"

"He's a criminal! I was told so yesterday by Mr. Drusen!" vehemently declared the stout lady. "Who else in this car could have stolen it?"

"Yes, I remember him!" corroborated old Drusen. "I was a bailiff in Judge Murray's court in Portland when he was sent up for the Morrison robbery. He was a jewel thief then, and he must have just gotten out of the peni——"

"Because a man once offended he can never go straight!" roared Gilder. Rage was overmastering him. "You'll find no bracelet on me. I'm innocent!"

Bob Dryden now arrived, and he looked very grave.

In silence he listened to the accusations of Mrs. Throule, the stout lady, and to Curt Gilder's angry denials.

"Are you sure you didn't lose the bracelet?" he queried of the woman.

"Wasn't it in my handbag?" she snapped. "And haven't I searched every inch of the berth? Oh, he got it, all right!"

"I'm willing to be searched!" said the ex-convict.

"Everybody in the car will have to submit to search," Bob Dryden declared. "Where was your bag last night, Mrs. Throule?"

"Under my pillow. I didn't get to sleep until after midnight from worrying. Finally I couldn't stay awake any longer. That man must have my bracelet! He's the only thief in this sleeper!"

Curt Gilder's face worked convulsively.

"Bob, you know that I wouldn't be fool enough to——"

"I didn't think you would, Curt." The detective spoke a trifle sadly.

"So you think—and you were wishing me luck yesterday! Oh, a dick is a dick, all right!"

"He has to be," Dryden observed. "I'll have to search you people. Mrs. Throule, you better go through the women, and I'll attend to the men, including the porter."

Mr. and Mrs. Drusen, the porter, and even the paralytic's nurse expressed as much willingness to be searched as Curt Gilder

All were examined thoroughly by Mrs. Throule and the railroad detective, but not a sign of the bracelet was found.

Equally fruitless proved an exploration of the berths, including that of the paralyzed patient, on the insistence of the nurse. This latter search was rather perfunctory.

"Might think I'd taken them and hidden them in the poor fellow's bedding," said the nurse. "I'm an honest woman, I am."

"Oh, there's only one person who could have taken them!" cried Mrs. Throule.

"Didn't the search prove me as guiltless as the rest?" barked Gilder savagely.

"Oh, you were smart enough to hide them some place! As long as somebody else has the gems, you must know what became of them. I want him arrested, Mr. Detective!"

"Did you take that bracelet, Curt?" inquired Bob Dryden sternly.

"No! Do you think I'd be such a fool, with you on board? And didn't I tell you I was going straight?"

"Men have told me that before—and then betrayed me." Sorrow was in the detective's tone. "I don't see where you put the stuff if you really took it, Curt. But maybe you are smarter than I dreamed."

"If you don't figure like a dick!" growled Curt in disgust.

"Well, somebody took those gems! Every one has been searched and nothing found. Therefore the thief must have disposed of the loot. To do it so cleverly he had to know how. And, of all in this car, who knows how better than you? I'll have to hold you!"

"Sure. He's a crook," stated the elderly Drusen with an air of finality.

"Make him tell what he did with my property!" screamed Mrs. Throule.

"Curt, if you have——"

"Oh, I've got nothing more to say, Dryden! I thought you were a white guy, but you ain't any different from any other cop. Go ahead and pinch me if you want to!"

Bob Dryden sighed and seated himself across from the young man. Moodily the latter stared from the window—they were in one of the middle sections—and the porter went tremblingly about his work.

"Soon be in Denver," hazarded the detective. "Gosh, I'm thirsty! Think I'll go out for a drink of water," and he hurried away.

He was back in a moment.

"Curt, have you a penknife?" he asked. "The thingumajig holding the paper cups is jammed. Got to pry it open, I guess."

Dully the young man passed over a small knife. Even in his misery he thought it queer that Dryden should immediately open the knife and lurch down the aisle with the blade out. He watched the detective.

At the berth of the paralytic the nurse drew aside for him to pass. The detective smiled and said something—and then an odd thing happened.

A movement of the train seemed to throw the thirsty Dryden off his feet. He plunged with his open knife on the berth of the paralyzed creature.

Then came a yell that startled the entire sleeper, and the figure of the supposedly helpless invalid arose straight up in the berth and then sank back. Curt Gilder saw the face of the nurse grow dark with rage.

"Watch her, Curt!" came the voice of Bob Dryden. "I'll handle this bird. I know where that bracelet is now!"

"Is he crazy?" pealed from Mrs. Throule in amazement.

"The man isn't paralyzed!" gasped Mrs. Drusen. "See him move!"

"My Gawd! What goings on!" gasped the porter.

Though shocked and startled, Gilder leaped to the aid of the detective and helped bring the angry nurse under control.

Dryden placed handcuffs on her and her patient, and a little later presented Mrs. Throule with her missing bracelet.

"The steel bracelets they wear look better on 'em than this one." The detective nodded at the two captives. The paralytic was now sitting up. "You owe this young man an apology, Mrs. Throule."

"But—but—I don't understand!" she stammered.

Nobody else did, least of all Curt Gilder.

Bob Dryden directed his explanation to the latter.

"Sorry you had to suffer for a while, Curt," he said kindly. "I knew you never took the bracelet. I'd have been crazy to suspect such a thing. All along I had a hunch where the stolen jewels were."

"Who in the world would have suspected a paralytic?" interjected Mr. Drusen. "We all thought he was so helpless!"

"That's it—who would suspect him? Criminals don't usually play such rôles, yet he and the nurse are both clever crooks. I think she swiped the bracelet and hid it on him, for he had it carefully stowed away."

"You knew they were crooks? Why didn't you arrest them then, the first thing?" demanded Mrs. Throule cuttingly.

"I didn't know; I just thought they were! And to help lull suspicion I pretended to believe that Curt Gilder must be guilty, simply because he had a prison record. But I was biding my time."

"You must be the kind of a detective one reads about," sneered the elderly Mr. Drusen. "An apparently helpless paralytic comes aboard with a nurse, and you recognize them as criminals, yet don't arrest them."

"Not exactly." Bob Dryden smiled a bit at this. "You see, I used to work for the claim agent of this road many years ago. A supposedly paralyzed man once got big damages from us. He faked his case, but he was such a good faker that he got away with it. I never forgot his face nor that of the woman who was then his wife. I managed to get a good look at this paralytic yesterday, and I was positive he was the same crook. And when the jewels disappeared I suspected that he had a hand in it. Getting off the train with his nurse at Denver would be a cinch. Ordinarily he could figure Gilder would be held and never a suspicion directed to him. Our railroad faker has branched out. His wife is now his nurse."

"A faker—what do you mean?" Mrs. Throule queried skeptically. "How can paralysis be faked?"

"It was faked well enough to deceive a jury years ago. Pins were run into this bird, and he didn't wince. That's how good he was. I figured that it was an easy matter to steel yourself to tests you knew were coming. But the sudden shock of a penknife jabbed into his shoulder was not so easy to stand. Did you see him leap up when I pulled my stumble? That proved my theory and gave the game away. It also saved Curt from arrest."

"Bob, you *are* a white guy, after all, and I'm a dumbbell," said Curt Gilder.

"Don't forget the little girl awaiting your return," smiled the detective, shaking hands with him. "For her sake stick to the upward path. I get off here with my prisoners."

AN INGENIOUS CISTERN

IN Central Africa the gigantic baebab tree, whose trunk sometimes attains a diameter of forty feet, often serves as a natural cistern, retaining rainwater in large quantities in a cavity formed at the top of the broad trunk.

Taking the hint thus afforded by nature, the Arabs artificially hollow out the trunks of large baebabs and fill them with water during the prevalence of rains as a provisions against the dry seasons.

These cisterns are in some cases twenty feet in height and eight or ten feet in diameter.

Detective Ability

"I SUPPOSE a detective is somewhat governed by his intuitions?" I remarked.

"Somewhat!" exclaimed the detective. "Very much so, young man. It is a gift. It is born in one, though, of course, it can be cultivated. Whether it can be acquired is quite another question. If a detective hasn't intuitions, he'll never amount to much in his profession."

"I have sometimes thought," I answered, "that noted physicians are very much governed by their intuitions. If not, how do they come to rise so rapidly? Of course, a good college training and a large experience, and all that, are necessary, and yet there seems to be something above and beyond them. Anyhow, I have known physicians of learning and experience who didn't rise, and they didn't lack ambition, either."

"It is aptitude, my dear boy," replied the detective. "It is as necessary in your profession as in any other, and if you haven't got it you'll never rise. You are right about physicians. I have a friend who'll talk to you about everything but your ailment, and yet all the time he will be finding out, in an intuitive way, just what's the matter with you and the treatment you require."

"How did you come to adopt the profession of a detective?" I ventured to ask.

"Partly from choice, partly from a consciousness of aptitude, but mainly owing to an incident connected with the earlier years of my life. It came to me like a revelation, and it showed me where I could be the most useful."

"Have a cigar?" I asked with an insinuating smile.

"Yes—because you always carry good ones," replied the detective. "Oh, I understand. You want me to relate the incident, so here goes."

He lit a cigar, recrossed his legs, assumed a contemplative mood, and then began:

"A dozen years ago a firm of New York detectives were very much puzzled over a case which had been placed in their hands. A wealthy citizen of Fifth avenue had died and had left a will which was so manifestly unjust that the heirs would not allow it to be probated.

"The testator had evidently prepared it while in a passion; then, too, there was probably a codicil, and to find that was a matter of great importance. It was believed that in it he had been more just by revoking much that had given dissatisfaction in the will. The latter had been found in a large, sealed envelope, upon the outside of which was the following."

Here the detective penciled the subjoined, and handed it to me:

CODICIL.

	S	28	18	23	24	D	
11	E		28	28		U	10
	X	28	9	14	11	O	

"Can you make anything out of that?" asked the detective

"'Sex duo' is probably Latin," I answered. "I'd want to wrestle with it for about six weeks."

"And it would throw you every time," the detective said with a laugh. "It was supposed to refer to the codicil, and to state where it was to be found, but nobody had succeeded in deciphering it. The deceased had been noted for his eccentricity, and there was no surprise about the mystery with which he had surrounded the whereabouts of the codicil.

"I was a newsboy at the time, and served the firm with the morning papers. I had heard them talk about the mysterious cipher that had baffled them, and I one day asked them to let me have a copy of it. When I said that I believed that I could solve it they laughed heartily. The senior member of the firm did not laugh. He looked sharply at me over his glasses and said:

"'Who knows but what he can? Perhaps the rest of us are entirely too smart. There is such a thing as being too smart; or, rather, we sometimes miss a solution because of its simplicity.'

"So they let me have a copy of the cipher to study.

"The next morning when I entered the office I cried jubilantly: 'I've solved it, sir.'

"'Oh, you have, eh?' replied the senior member of the firm, with an incredulous grin. 'You must be an exceedingly bright boy. Can you read it?'

"'Yes, sir,' I said.

"'And does it make sense?'

"'You must be the judge of that, sir,' was my reply. 'It says With W. W. Ward.'

"The detective sprang to his feet, a look of intense astonishment on his face. He struck his desk a blow with his fist and exclaimed:

"'As sure as I'm alive, boy, you have made something intelligible out of it. Better still, you have correctly solved it! I remember that W. W. Ward was an intimate friend of the testator. Mr. Ward will return from Europe next month, and I am certain that he is the custodian of the codicil. How did you hit upon the key? Can you make the thing read that way for me?'

"'Of course I can, sir,' said I. 'I don't know how it came to me, but I got the impression that "sex duo" was "exodus" transposed, and that the figures on the outside of the square stood for the eleventh chapter and tenth verse, which reads: "And Moses and Aaron did all these wonders before Pharaoh." That clue aided me to solve the figures inside the square; 28 occurs four times, and stands for the four W's. Here is the paper upon which I figured it out.'

"He examined the paper, his face beaming with satisfaction. Under the letters in the verse I had arranged the numerals in their regular order, and by substituting letters for the figures in the cipher I had solved the puzzle which had baffled some of the best detectives in the city. How did I come to grapple with it that way? Ask me something not so hard. It came to me intuitively, and that is all I can say about it."

"It was correct?" I asked.

"It was."

"And the codicil was found?"

"It was."

"And what was there in it for you? I suppose the heirs paid you handsomely?"

"No, they didn't. They had no reason to. The codicil was less kind to them than the will. Still, I had my reward. The senior detective said to me: 'What do you make a week, on an average, selling papers?' 'Nine dollars,' I said. 'Well, I'll give you twelve dollars a week and put you on the force. You have done a wonderful piece of good work. You are a born detective. Things come to you as a revelation. You will certainly rise in the profession,' Well, I rose. Perhaps I am not done rising yet."

AN OLD TRICK

AN old swinding trick reappeared recently in the vicinity of Brooklyn Bridge, with the result that Bastino de Batolo of 50 Oak street and Santi Scappatori of Hamilton street were locked up in police headquarters, charged with attempted grand larceny.

According to the police, the prisoners were attempting the old "drop game." One of them dropped a purse, stuffed with paper and counterfeit currency on the sidewalk, and, when it was picked up by a passer-by, demanded that the finder share. At this point the detective interfered.

A Clever Game

By DONALD GEORGE McDONALD

PART TWO

MR. LOWE was seated in the living-room of his own home, vainly trying to read the newspaper, when a servant announced some callers.

"Who are they?" snapped the president nervously.

"Mr. Peters and Mr. Smead."

The president looked puzzled.

"Show them in."

As the two men entered the room Peters stepped forward a bit.

"I am sorry to call so late in the evening," he said, "but my friend, Mr. Smead, said it was necessary. Please allow me to introduce him to you, Mr. Lowe."

The two men shook hands and the president smiled.

"Pray be seated, and tell me the reason for your visit." He glanced sidewise at the clock above the mantelpiece. It was just nine.

Peters spoke. His voice was steady and the words came easily and quickly.

"Mr. Smead was a great friend to me in the old days. He is a detective, and I went to him to-night, thinking that perhaps he could help to clear up the mystery of those jewels. After what happened I was desperate. I could see a prison ahead of me—the ghastly place. I believe I am the victim of a 'plant,' Mr. Lowe. For I am not guilty; you do believe that I am, don't you?"

"I find it difficult to believe that you are," said the president. "Still I have got to have you watched, and have instructed Caper to keep you under surveillance until that necklace is found."

"I can see that you are doubtful," pursued Peters, "by the tone of your voice, and I supposed I was being shadowed. Very well, let us get down to facts, then. I have told Mr. Smead the story of the disappearance. I have told him how Mr. Drebber notified you that he received this morning by mail a package which contained, on first glance, the missing necklace. Later, however, you, yourself, found it to be but a paste imitation. I have told my friend," continued Peters, moistening his lips, "that a note looking like my handwriting was enclosed in the package which stated that I was overcome with remorse and was restoring the stolen property."

"Pardon me," interrupetd Detective Smead. "Mr. Lowe, did you see the package in which the false necklace was received?"

"I did," said Lowe, "and it was a bona-fide package that had gone through the mail to Mr. Drebber's apartment, and was postmarked from a sub-station in this city that is close to Peters's home."

"Peters's home?" queried the detective in surprise.

"Yes," said Lowe bluntly.

"The supposition is, then, that Peters stole the real necklace, made a paste imitation, and mailed it to Drebber, thinking that that individual would believe it genuine, while in the meantime Peters would dispose of or hide the real jewels. There was a note of sarcasm in the detective's voice.

Mr. Lowe colored slightly.

"I presume that would be the interpretation," he said.

The detective arose.

"Mr. Lowe," said he, "it is absolutely imperative that you take us down to the store. This case is most interesting, and it is necessary that I make an examination at once."

A frown settled on the face of the president.

"Really, sir, I think any fresh examination is entirely unnecessary. We have had an able detective on the case from the very first, and he and the members of our firm have searched the entire establishment in the past four days."

"What an appalling waste of energy," murmured Smead. "I assure you that I will not take days for whatever search I shall make."

"I do not think so, either," remarked Mr. Lowe stiffly. "If the necklace is not found to-morrow by four o'clock we will have to pay the owner."

"And you do not want to do that, do you?" The detective shrugged his broad, heavy shoulders. "That is why you must do as I ask. I want to help you to avoid paying for that necklace." So Lowe led them down to the store.

Mr. Smead was true to his word. He completed his search at the store in twenty minutes. Mr. Lowe and old Peters had remained in the former's private office while the detective had carried on his task alone. As Smead entered the office the detective nodded at the president.

"May I see a list of the names and addresses of the employees of this store?" he asked.

The president produced one from a drawer in his desk, and the detective studied it carefully, then he passed it back and jotted something down in his notebook.

"Now, may I have Mr. Drebber's address, in case I should come across anything of interest?"

"It is on this card," and Mr. Lowe handed over a tiny pasteboard.

"Very good," said Smead. "Now for a little glance around these downstairs offices. Mr. Lowe, if you will be good enough to turn on a few of these lights, we'll be able to see a bit better."

The moment Mr. Lowe left the room to go to the back hallway where the electric switches were located the detective seized Peters by the arm. "Quick—tell me—which is Lowe's office?" he whispered.

Peters indicated it with a gesture.

The door was unlocked. Smead entered quickly, cast an appraising eye over the furniture, floors, walls and ceiling, then left, closing the door softly behind him. Scarcely had he regained his former position than Mr. Lowe returned. The outer office was now blazing with light.

"We had best look at the private offices first, I suppose," ventured the president. He thereupon swung open three doors, which gave admittance to the rooms occupied by various members of the company. Smead looked them over quickly but thoroughly. He had a remarkably active body and a most alert eye. Presently he turned to the president.

"All right," he said; "so much for these offices; what else of interest have you to show me?"

"That depends upon what you would consider interesting," replied Mr. Lowe, venturing a smile. "There is the outer office, which we are in at the present time, the stenographer's desk being there over in the corner, and then we have the storerooms and the show-room. Which will you have?"

"We might take a look at this outer office." Smead stepped over to the stenographer's desk. "Which is used, Mr. Lowe, shorthand or dictaphone?"

"Dictaphone," said Lowe briefly.

The detective walked backwards and forwards some six feet back of the desk. He seemed to be looking for something in the thick rug that covered the floor. Presently an exclamation escaped his lips.

"Mr. Lowe, why did the stenographer move her desk? In its former position the desk was only four feet from the switchboard—very convenient, I should think. The desk now must be all of eleven feet farther removed. The rug is marked where her desk stood formerly."

"To get better light for her typing—at least so she told me."

"Yes, that seems to be true; the light is better here," admitted Smead. "What is this used for?" he continued, laying his large palm on a light golden-oak table? "Dictaphone cylinders, I imagine, stationery and so forth, eh?"

Lowe nodded.

"Nice little girl, I presume. Blond prob-

ably. Butterfly type with bobbed hair, plucked eyelashes, and all the rest, eh?"

"Quite to the contrary, sir," replied Lowe; "she is a brunette who hates flappers, dresses, acts and talks like a lady, and does her work most efficiently."

Smead smiled.

"Well, I can't always hit it right. Some of these blond hairs on the rug around her chair suggested that train of reasoning. No doubt you have other women working in the store who are blondes?"

Lowe thought a minute. "N-no," he said slowly, "I am sure we have not. That's odd, isn't it?"

"Oh, we're likely to find many strange things before we get through with this case," replied the detective cheerfully. "Now, Mr. Lowe, will you show me the store-room where you keep your stationery, supplies and such stuff."

The president at once led the way to a large room in the rear of the basement. It was filled with boxes and packages of stationery piled high on shelves, which ran entirely around the room, save for the space occupied by the one entrance.

"Do any of the employees of the store have access to this room?" inquired Smead. He was kneeling in front of a carton containing dictaphone cylinders, and was examining them closely, with something akin to amazement playing over his face.

Mr. Lowe nodded.

"Any one may come in here through the working hours. We keep everything of value in the vault, and there is nothing here to offer any incentive to a thief."

The detective scraped something from the bottom of one of the wax records and placed it in an envelope in his pocket. "Nevertheless," he commented dryly, "the examination here has not been entirely fruitless. And, by the way, Mr. Lowe, may I ask if that detective searched this room?"

"He most certainly did."

"Why do you speak so positively?"

"Because I stood in the doorway here and watched him."

"Did he seem to find anything of interest among these?" Smead swung his hand in the direction of the package of dictaphone cylinders.

"No," said the president.

"Well, it may be I have struck a wrong trail. We'll see. Will you be in your office at about four o'clock to-morrow, Mr. Lowe?"

The president spoke sadly.

"I will. I am to meet Mr. Drebber in my office at four o'clock to-morrow afternoon to pay him the money. You are welcome to the funeral, Mr. Smead."

The detective smiled. "Mr. Lowe, I have a decided hunch that I'm going to get my fingers on that necklace. If I don't have it by four o'clock to-morrow afternoon I shall come to the meeting anyway, and we'll see if Mr. Drebber won't be sport enough to give me another day's work on the case."

"I doubt if he would."

"Possibly not; at least we can try. Even if you do have to pay him the money I am confident I will be able to get that necklace, in which case, of course, your loss will not be so great."

The president was visibly fighting back a great surge of emotion. He walked unsteadily up to the detective and held out his hand.

"My friend, I—I hesitate to hope. The jewels have been gone four days now. I never expect to see them again, but if you should—if you should get them back, my debt of gratitude to you would never cease."

Four o'clock the next afternoon found Lowe, Cameron, Peters, Caper and Drebber in the president's private office. Lowe sat before his desk. His face was white, and there were heavy rings under his eyes. At his left sat Cameron. In the corner by the window stood old Peters, his eyes wandering helplessly from one to the other of the men. There was something of expectancy in his attitude—a most forlorn expectancy—the towering walls of the penitentiary, the guards, the grueling work, the separation from his daughter, the hideous, humdrum experience of living, just living without any hope of pardon or release until it came in the form of death.

At the side of the room, facing the men

at the desk, sat Caper, looking dejectedly at the patterning of the rug. All confidence seemed to have left him. Four and a half days he had been on the trail of the missing jewels, and now, at the hour of reckoning, he was no nearer finding them than when he started.

Mr. Drebber sat facing the detective at the other side of the office. He was very well-dressed, and his large four-in-hand tie of modest pattern, his neatly fitting dark-gray suit, and shoes shined to a sparkling brilliance, all told of a man careful in his habits. Presently he withdrew a cigarette from his case, inserted it in his distinctive holder and, lighting it, leaned far back in his chair and blew forth a great blue cloud of fragrant smoke.

Mr. Lowe broke the silence.

"I am sorry, gentlemen," he said, "to keep you waiting for possibly two or three minutes. Ah"—he added hastily and rising to his feet—"unless I am mistaken here is the man I was awaiting."

There came a knock at the door, which was opened without further ceremony. Smead entered. He looked about quickly at the occupants of the office, laid his straw hat on the desk, drew a chair up in front of the door, and sat down. He was breathing heavily. It was some few seconds before he spoke, and then he addressed himself to Peters.

"You did what I told you?"

Peters nodded.

"Mr. Lowe," continued the detective, "I have not got that ornament as yet. We must ask Mr. Drebber to be lenient. By the way, which is he?"

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the president hastily. "Gentlemen, this is Mr. Smead. He has been trying to find the necklace, and I assure you, Caper, that it is no disrespect to you having him on the job, too. Mr. Smead, it seems, is an old friend of Peters here, and took the case at Peters's request. I had nothing whatever to do with it."

"Which is Mr. Drebber?" asked the detective, looking from Cameron to the individual he had named.

"Here," said Drebber briefly.

"I am glad to know you, sir. I wonder if it would be asking too much from you to give me one day more on the case? I understand from Mr. Lowe that the time has expired which was allowed in the contract, and he must pay you now the two hundred thousand dollars. I am positive I'll learn the whereabouts of the necklace. I have been unsuccessful so far to-day in being able to get my hands on it or the thief. Will you, Mr. Drebber, extend the time one day longer?"

Mr. Drebber stiffened perceptibly.

"Your request, Mr. Smead, is rather unusual, in view of the fact that I have now waited five days. I fear that you are overconfident, and that the necklace will never be recovered. Two detectives have been on the case: Mr. Caper, here, who is a capable man, and yourself, whom I suppose are equally as efficient. I cannot give you the time you ask. I do not deny in the least that I am profoundly sorry for Mr. Lowe and the other members of this firm, but it was an out-and-out business proposition. Furthermore, I was called out of the city yesterday on an important matter, but I was unable to go because of the loss of this necklace and this meeting. Already I have lost considerable by this enforced delay."

"Well," said the detective slowly, "possibly all of you would be interested in knowing what I have uncovered?"

Every one looked expectant.

Smead tilted his chair back against the door and went on:

"I promise you I'll be brief."

He opened an envelope which he had withdrawn from his pocket and shook out the contents on Mr. Lowe's desk. "What does that look like to you?" he asked, addressing the president.

After a brief examination the latter spoke.

"Cotton batting," said he.

"It is a strange thing, isn't it," said the detective dryly, "for a stenographer to allow cotton batting to be placed in these dictaphone cylinders? One would think it would tend to make them move unevenly. And I happen to know that the manufacturer of these cylinders does not pack them in this

sort of thing when they are shipped from his plant. For what do you suppose it was put there?"

The president shook his head.

"I can't imagine."

"If anything," continued the detective, "the necklace, for instance, were to fall from a considerable height into one of these cylinders filled with this stuff, its fall would be practically noiseless, wouldn't it?"

"But, my friend," interrupted the president, "how could that happen?"

"Suppose a neat little hole had been drilled through the floor of the repair room, and that hole should happen to be directly above the dictaphone cylinders, placed end up in their containers on a table in the room below. What then?"

"Is there such a hole?" asked the president tensely, leaning forward in his chair. "Did you find one?"

"I did."

"Why didn't you find it, Caper?" The president turned suddenly towards the private detective.

"I think I am speaking for Mr. Caper," interrupted Smead, "when I say that he didn't try to find it."

"That's a lie!" The other detective rose suddenly from his chair, his face blanched, his fingers working in a fury. "That's a lie!"

Smead's right hand entered the pocket of his coat. "I beg of you, Mr. Caper, to resume your seat, and I repeat what I said before—you didn't try to find that hole, even though you, yourself, made it that evening when you remained in the repair-room, put the extra locks on the windows and made sure that everything was secure."

There was sarcasm in the detective's voice.

Caper sank back into his chair. "It's a damned lie, too!" he croaked hoarsely.

"So you said before. Caper, you really should have been more careful in your choice of names. What is your real one? I know it is not Caper, for Caper has been out of town for two weeks; he returned from the West a little sooner than he was expected. Old man, you should have been positive that he wouldn't return before you pulled this job. And by the way, 'Caper,' have you any suspicions as to who I might be?"

"I never saw your cursed face before."

"Well, well, that's not bad. You should have known what your employer looked like before you decided to impersonate me. I am the head of the National agency in this city, and you, I was told by our office manager, was a new man he took on during my absence. Caper is one of our best men."

"You—what?"

"I believe you heard me." Smead settled back in his chair and looked at Drebber.

"He is a smooth crook, isn't he," he said to Lowe, indicating the so-called Caper with a jerk of his head. "Mr. Drebber, he may be smooth, but he doesn't wear such exquisite ties as you do. What would you consider that tie worth at the present time."

"About two dollars and a half," snapped that individual. "What nonsense is this you're giving us?"

"Oh, it's not exactly nonsense. I am inclined to think you have underrated the value of that tie. Personally I would estimate it at two hundred thousand dollars. Will you please remove it so that we may examine its beauty?"

In a flash Drebber had sprung from his chair and passed behind Mr. Lowe and Cameron. Only Peters stood between himself and the window, but the old man held a revolver in his hand, and the hand was steady and his aim straight. "Hands up!" snapped the old man. For a bare instant Drebber paused.

"If you make another move, Dan Scott, I'll let this .32 drill you," roared Smead. He was standing now, his revolver in his right hand, his left reaching behind to the door-knob. The next instant the door sprang open.

"No hurry, Caper," said the detective to the man who had just entered. "These folks aren't going to move unless they're told to."

The same instant there was a deafening report. It was Smead's revolver that had spoken. The man who had called himself "Caper" sank to the floor groaning and clutching at his shoulder.

"He almost got you, Peters," said Detective Smead. "All right, now," he added, turning to Caper, "handcuffs on Scott over there," indicating Drebber; "as for this guy, he won't be troublesome any more. It's only a flesh wound, I imagine. He'll be in good shape for prison after the trial is over."

Smead stepped quickly across the office to Drebber. "While my friend is making you harmless, we'll just take a look at that lovely necktie."

With a single motion the detective detached it from the man's collar. He held it out towards Mr. Lowe.

"Allow me to introduce to you a most novel safety deposit box. A hollow, metal knot, as you see, with another cylindrical chamber leading from it to the underfold of his tie—all concealed by very excellent silk."

Lowe's hand trembled as he took the tie and withdrew from the inside chamber the missing necklace. Then he turned to Smead:

"I will not forget. I—I cannot talk now, my friend; I am too shaken up. But I will not forget. You have saved me from disaster."

"You're entirely welcome," said the detective, grinning broadly. "It is a great pleasure to get my hands on this particular set of crooks.

"Dan Scott here, or Drebber as you know him, has been wanted by the police for some little time. It was suspected that he was concerned in the robbery of the Sheltenham necklace which you hold in your hand. It was stolen from Lady Sheltenham in England five years ago. Particulars of the case naturally reached my hands and I have been continually on the watch for the jewels and the thief. On the former a ten thousand-dollar reward is still offered. It will be another pleasure to see that my old friend Peters gets half that reward.

"As for this party"—he indicated the wounded man—"his carelessness is positively shocking. His fingerprint on the brace he used in drilling the hole in the floor will be ample evidence, as will be also his forgery of old Peters's handwriting which he enclosed in the package of bogus stones addressed by himself to Scott. There is also an unmistakable odor of peppermint on the flap of the package, and under the stamp, and I believe this man is rather fond of peppermint candy. That, however, is only circumstantial evidence.

"The stenographer in the outer office is also under arrest. Her work was simple, but it was necessary to the successful completion of Scott's plans. She was Scott's girl. All she had to do was to move her desk under pretext of getting better light, and see that the dictaphone cylinders were kept at all times directly below the hole in the repair-room. Our friend who calls himself 'Caper' is a pal of Scott's, and it was he who dropped the sparklers through the hole in the floor. The girl held them and slipped the gems to Scott when he came here.

"I recalled that in the days of Scott's early crimes he used a similar hiding-place for his loot, so I grabbed his necktie at a venture and saw I had made no error. Immediately after leaving the office he would have pulled out on the first train."

There was silence for a few seconds. Then Smead turned to Scott.

"Old-timer," he said, "there's ten years for you or I miss my guess."

And he marched his prisoners away.

(*The end*)

The Art of Secret Writing

CIPHER-WRITING has proved of greater value to statesmen and ambassadors for preserving secrecy in matters of national moment. In times of danger especially, with everybody afraid of everybody else, it has always been much practiced. It was during the civil war of Charles I.'s time that cipher-writing in this country attained its height. It became such a common and familiar art then that Doctor Wallis, the celebrated mathematician, says, "There is scarce a person of quality but is more or less acquainted with it, and doth as there is occasion make use of it." Both Royalists and Parliamentarians found it worth while in those days to employ experts to decipher any dispatches they might capture from the other side. During the French Revolution also the upper classes were much given to writing in cipher.

Like many other handy inventions, cryptography has occasionally been diverted to objectionable purposes, to aid in conspiracy and to further the ends of crime.

There is a sort of cipher employed by the begging fraternity. It is not much in use in large cities, where the inhabitants are considered too "fly," or experienced; but in country places mendicant hieroglyphics are to be met with on door-posts and door-steps, and at the corners of streets, telling succeeding vagrants what success they are likely to meet with in asking charity. In the Slang Dictionary we are told of a clergyman who had studied this form of stenography, and by marking a square "unfavorable; likely to have you taken up; mind the dog"; and a circle (dangerous) "sure of a month in prison" on the gates of his parsonage, enjoyed a singular immunity from alms-seekers and yeggs on the tramp.

There in an elaborate article in cipher in Rees's Cyclopedia. It was written by William Blair, quite a cryptographic enthusiast.

Of all the ciphers, the simplest is that in which, instead of the right letter, other letters one or two or three, or, in fact, any number of places in advance in the alphabet are made use of. Thus, what are really *a, b* and *c,* may be written *b, c* and *d,* or *c, d* and *e.* This was the method followed by Julius Cæsar and Augustus.

As an example of a cipher communication in which one letter in advance is made use of, take this advertisement from the "Agony Column" of the Times, June 23, 1864:

"L'Abbandonata — Bmfyboesb Spdigpsu sfqsufe efbe. J tbx žpv zfufsebz. Npbuf wbjomz tfbsdife ufo zfbst."

This reads:

"Alexandra Rochford reported dead. I saw you yesterday. Moat vainly searched ten years."

In the following two letters ahead are employed:

"Ngv og mpqy aqw ctg uchg cpf gcug oa vqtvwtgf okpf."

In plain English—

"Let me know you are safe and ease my tortured mind."

By way of variety, the alphabet is sometimes inverted, *z* being used for *a, y* for *b, x* for *c,* and so on. Or a more difficult plan may be followed. The first seven letters of the alphabet may be represented by the second seven, *h* standing for *a, i* for *b,* and so on, whilst the second seven are represented in their turn by the first seven, *a* standing for *h, b* for *i,* etc. The six letters following

these fourteen are represented by the last six letters of the alphabet—*o* by *u*, *p* by *v*, etc.—and the last six by six immediately preceding them—*u* by *o*, *v* by *p*, etc. The two sevens and the two sixes exhaust the alphabet.

On the 10th of February, 1852, the following singular notice appeared in the *Times*, written in a cipher still further advanced in difficulty:

"Tig tjohw it tig jfhiiwola og tig psguw. —F. D. N."

The first letter of each word here is just as it should be; the second letter of each word is one letter in advance of the right one; the third letter of each word, when there is a third letter, is two letters in advance of the right one, and so on. Employing this key we find the interpretation to be:

"The *Times* is the Jefferies of the press."

Some one evidently was either poking his fun at the newspaper or else giving vent to his malice.

To decipher writing of this kind, in which the alphabet seems turned topsy-turvy, is, however, comparatively easy so long as the same letters are always used to represent the same thing. The decipherer keeps well in mind the rules of frequency with which different letters occur in the English language; that the commonest letter is *e* and the next in frequency *t*, and that after these come in order the following groups:—*a, o, n, i; r, s, h; d, l; c, w, u, m; f, y, g, p, b; v, k; x, q, j, z.* He knows, too, that single letters serving as words are *a*, I or O; that the commonest words of two letters are *of, to, in, it, is, be*, etc.; and the commonest of three letters, *the, and, for*, etc., and that double letters are most likely *ee, oo, ll*, or *ss*. These and similar facts are the tools with which he goes to work, and before their exercise no cipher enigma of the substituted letter class ever kept its secret long.

The real puzzle begins when the values of the letters are changed at every stage of the message, *a* meaning *b* in one place, *g* in a second, *l* in a third, and maybe *z* in a fourth.

Cipher-writing may be rendered doubly puzzling by having all the words joined together, as if the message formed one long word. False divisions are sometimes introduced between the words; "dummy" letters are inserted; words are spelt backwards; and such words as "and," "the," etc., are left out—all with a view of throwing the decipherer off the scent.

There are some ciphers in which the right words are employed, but they are so arranged that the sense is only understood when they are arranged upwards, or downwards, or diagonally. Here is an example from the "Secret and Swift Messenger" of Bishop Wilkins:

T	i	l	w	e	l	d	f	r	e
h	t	l	s	s	o	o	t	e	i
e	s	i	u	h	h	u	u	s	l
p	h	n	t	a	o	t	o	h	p
e	t	c	s	l	t	t	h	a	p
s	o	r	g	l	e	h	t	n	u
t	d	e	n	n	l	e	i	d	s
i	e	a	o	o	b	s	w	s	y
l	c	s	m	t	a	i	e	p	d
e	n	e	a	b	e	e	g	e	e

The key to this cipher is: Read down the first column, up the second, down the third and so on. The words are: "The pestilence doth still increase amongst us; we shall not be able to hold out the siege without fresh and speedy supplies."

In cipher-writing numbers are sometimes substituted for letters. As an example, take the following from the "Agony Column" of the *Times* of September 7th, 1866, in which the alphabet is numbered backwards, *z* being 1 and *a* 26.

"1. 2. 9—15 22 7, 14 22, 8 22 13 23, 24 12 9 9 22 8 11 12 13 23 22, 13 24 22, 18 7 19, 9 22 24 7 12 9, 12 21, 24 12 15 15 22 20 22, 18 7, 4 18 15 15, 22 3 11 15 26 18 13, 19 12 4, 7 19 18 13 20 8, 8 7 26 13 23, 18, 20 12, 26 25 9 12 26 23, 13 22 3 7, 14 12 13 7 19."

This reads:

X. Y. R.—Let me send correspondence with rector of college; it will explain how things stand. I go abroad next month."

Just as numbers are used to indicate letters, so letters are frequently employed as a cipher for numbers. This kind of cipher is common amongst business people for making prices on goods and samples. They choose a word or words containing in all eleven different letters, and to each letter a number is assigned. Thus "wrongheads" may do a duty for 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 0, in which case wr-d will stand for 12-9; og-e for 35-7, ns-h for 40-6, and so on.

Punning ciphers are sometimes met with, such as "5 meet me 6 at 5s. 3ft.," which is an invitation to meet me between 5 and 6 at Crown Yard. But this represents fun more than serious business.

GIVES AWAY BONDS

JAMES FOLEY, an eighteen-year-old messenger boy of the banking firm of Charles D. Barney & Co., 15 Broad street, who "lost" stocks worth $141,000 recently, has confessed to the police that he gave the bundle of stocks to two men who had promised him a share of the profits, according to an announcement made at Police Headquarters by Inspector John Coughlin.

He had met the two men a week ago and they had given him an expensive dinner at Coney Island, he said, after which they assured him that he could enjoy such luxuries all the time if he would take advantage of his opportunities.

The boy made his confession the other night, after which he spent the night in a chair in the Old Slip police station, but was not locked up, as the police wished him to accompany them on a tour of the financial district in search of the two men. They are believed by the police to be part of a gang that systematically preys on bond messenger boys, tempting them to betray their employers.

The bonds intrusted to Foley were Continental Can Company securities, forty in number, which he was to have delivered to the offices of Gude, Winmill & Co. About an hour and a half after setting out from his employer's office he returned and reported that the bonds had disappeared from his hip pocket and he was unable to find them. Detectives questioned him at length, but he seemed to be telling the truth and he was not detained. Detectives Brown and Daly, however, learned from questioning other messenger boys that Foley had been seen in other places than those he named to the detectives. When questioned again he broke down and confessed.

He said he had met one of the conspirators on the street and was asked how much he had with him. When he said $141,000 the man signaled another man, and the three went to the washroom on the fifteenth floor of an office building, where he handed over the bonds to the strangers.

They promised to sell the bonds and to give him 40 per cent. of the proceeds later in the day. This, they assured him, would enable him to enjoy Coney Island delights all summer without working.

He admitted, according to the police, that seven months ago, when in the employ of Macquoid & Coady, 25 Broad street, he reported the loss of another packet of bonds. He did not lose these either, he admitted, but turned them over to two men who had promised him a share of the profits. They gave him $40.

Foley lives in Ridgewood, Queens. His employers are said by the police not to be eager to prosecute him. The bonds were insured against loss by the National Surety Company.

Bloodless Blue

By ARTHUR LOCKWOOD

FARASCETTI hurried to the chief's office in response to an imperative summons. There was no doubt about his anxiety, judging by the first glance at him.

"Here's blackmail *de luxe*," he exploded before the detective-sergeant had seated himself. The chief fingered a letter on the desk before him nervously. "Somebody's got to run this down quickly or—well, I've got my resignation all written out. I'll only take a very few minutes of the mayor's time in saying farewell."

Farascetti's black eyes flashed. This last remark had struck something responsive in his Latin make-up. He liked the compliment implied by the importance of the case. His face clouded a moment later as he realized how important it was to him that Kelly should not resign.

The chief continued: "You've been reading about that Willmore girl's disappearance?"

Farascetti nodded.

"The theory that she wandered away is all wrong."

"Wrong?" Farascetti queried in surprise.

"Yes," said the chief, "she was abducted. Her father has been getting a blizzard of blackmail letters."

The detective's eyes widened, and Chief Kelly continued his exposition.

"This morning he got this in the mail," he said, and pointed to his desk.

Farascetti's eyes followed the motion. They saw a dirty piece of paper, a letter and a gruesome piece of flesh.

"A human finger!" exclaimed the detective.

"Yes," the chief replied. "Now read the letter." He handed it to Farascetti. The detective read:

"ARKPORT, LAST NIGHT.

"DEAR MR. WILLMORE:

"Did you think we were bluffing when we told you that you would be a fool to trifle with us?

"Enclosed is your daughter's finger.

"This ought to let you know we mean what we say.

"Leave the money to-night or worse will happen.

"NO MONKEY BUSINESS."

Farascetti read the carefully typed page again and again. Blackmail was not new to him, by any means, but here was something surpassing everything in his experience. Nothing could be bolder than this attempt to extort ransom from the richest man in the city, and nothing more horrible than the means employed!

Instinctively his mind, trained in the approach to such mysteries, sought further.

"Any other letters?" he asked eagerly.

"There's one more," the chief said, and he handed him another letter, written on paper of the same size and kind. The typewriting was also identical. "This one," the chief explained, "was the first. He got it yesterday morning."

Farascetti read again:

"NEW YORK, LAST NIGHT.

"DEAR MR. WILLMORE:

"Your daughter is in our hands.

"She will be safe only if you comply in every detail with the conditions of this note. If you do not you will be a blind, stupid fool.

"Drive your new roadster to the country club to-night. Leave it at the steward's entrance, and under the driver's seat leave $10,000.

"You will have to get back to town by train.

"Don't cause yourself the grief that will come from any attempt to apprehend us.

"Yours truly,

"No Monkey Business."

When he had finished the chief spoke again.

"Old Willmore called me in yesterday morning, just after he got that one in the mail. I advised him to leave the money and set a trap. He howled that he would not pay a penny. Said he didn't want to make himself the prey of all the crooks in America. He declared his intention to ignore the whole business. I had two men out at the club last night. The place was deserted for the winter. They found nothing.

"I couldn't do anything with Willmore. You see the thing is written with a Eureka portable. It was mailed at the main station, and the clerk's memory was bad. That don't give us much. These birds evidently have an educated correspondent among them. They're no ordinary kidnappers. I tried all day yesterday to dope something out; tried to trace the daughter's movements and all that. Last seen of her she went to visit her aunt. Aunt says she never saw her.

"Oh, yes, and I got a fingerprint off'n the envelope that the threat came in. It was on the flap." The chief fished in a drawer and pulled forth a plain white envelope. Farascetti carefully examined the dusted tracery of whorls.

"What about this fingerprint?" he asked.

"Not worth a hang," the chief grunted in disgust. "Not a thing in our records looks anything like it. Sure, it's a good print, but whose is it?"

Farascetti was puzzled. His eyes again went to the mutilated digit. He picked it up.

"Funny color that bloodless blue," he remarked. "It's her right forefinger. Ugh! They must be a cold-blooded lot! She must have screamed loud enough to be heard all over Arkport."

"I guess you know all I do about it now," said the chief in conclusion. "Go out, and for jiminy's sake find *something*."

Farascetti rose.

"A bum fingerprint and a couple of clueless letters—and you want something within forty-eight hours," he said with a dubious shrug. "By the way, why this talk about resigning."

"Why!" the chief snorted. "They'll throw me out if I don't. Do you know that old Willmore is boss of the Independents? Do you know that the *Clarion's* attack on the administration is nothing more than his howl because his ticket didn't get in last fall? What do you think all that hullabaloo about the police inefficiency is for, especially when the town's quiet as a churchyard? You think that old miserable 'd pass up this opportunity to get my scalp, huh?"

The chief paused as though to let the facts just related sink in. Farascetti's head nodded slowly as cognizance came to him.

"Don't let them get anything on us," the chief warned; "if you do"—he paused and looked at the detective keenly—"you know about where you'll land."

Farascetti stiffened. Yes, indeed, he did know! Back to the Black Hand squad to be buffeted around with never a chance to get out of that obscure rut. This chief gone and a political enemy in, what chance would his ability have for recognition?

"Yes," he mused slowly, "I know." There was a meaning more articulate than the words indicated. The chief did not miss it.

When he left the chief's office Farascetti's mind was engrossed with thoughts of the letters. There was a way somehow, and he must find it.

Old Willmore was a crank and an eccentric. His past deeds of vindictiveness and Simon-pure meanness had not only shown his power, but had made him feared. How might he strike back now? What might his reaction be to the grief of his only daughter maimed in open defiance of the law and its minions?

Yet Farascetti knew it was a good police department. He knew the muck-raking charges of graft were false and that every man on the force worked long and hard,

even as he himself did, to keep the town "quiet as a church-yard."

Now his hand had been set at the most important task of his career. He went about it coolly.

A superficial observer might have said Farascetti was excited as he worked in the Bertillon room that afternoon. Such was not the case at all; he was merely working fast. He did not lose sight of the necessity to take account of time.

He examined piles of fingerprint cards. He sought photographs and Bertillon measurements. He even skimmed through the reward sheets. Two hours elapsed before he was finished with this. When he had found what he wanted he went down to the detective bureau and had a long talk with Flynn. Flynn was able to give him information he wanted. Next he made half a dozen telephone calls. This done, he hurriedly ordered a taxicab and went away in it.

At four o'clock he made an arrest.

Jay Fayer, a thin, angular young man with thick-lensed glasses and a hard, cunning face was the man he took into custody.

"What ye got him fer?" asked Goulden of the Pickpocket Squad when Farascetti brought his prisoner to headquarters.

Farascetti was taciturn.

"Blackmail," was all he replied.

Farascetti led the young man into a private conference room. For more than an hour they were closeted together. When this session was over Farascetti locked Fayer in a cell and again called a taxicab.

While he was waiting the chief came in, his face the picture of eager curiosity.

"I hear you got some one!" he blurted.

"Yeah," replied Farascetti, "but wait, there's more coming. When I'm finished I'll have an earful for you."

The chief could not restrain himself.

"Tell me about this guy," he pursued. "Got anything on him?"

"Not as much as I'm going to have."

"Who is he?"

"Name's Fayer," Farascetti answered. "He's a student. Never been pinched before. Is his fingerprint on the envelope?" The chief whistled in surprise. Farascetti's cab arrived. When he was gone the chief sauntered down to the cell-room, there to try his own luck at questioning the prisoner.

But his luck was bad.

"It's got me stopped," the chief said to one of the hangers-on in the bureau. "I don't know how Farascetti does it!"

"Nor I, either," replied the sleuth, shaking his head and smiling faintly.

Aaron Willmore sat in the richly ornamented library of his home. For a man whose daughter had been captured by kidnappers, he was in exceedingly good humor. But the fact was—and he was well aware of it—his daughter was at that moment reclining on a chaise longue in her boudoir and regaling those afternoon hours with the pages of a best-seller.

Willmore's tiny close-set eyes had a sinister gleam. His face was wrinkled in pleasure, but that wraith-like expression could hardly be called a smile. This man got pleasure out of meanness, out of craft and out of mischief, so his smile reflected the thing that caused it.

What he was reading caused him to chuckle. It sounded like the rattle of broken gears. Those proofs were quite satisfactory. He saw no need for any alterations. He knew that they would be printed the following day under streaming headlines, for that was the way he had ordered it. The *Clarion* never failed to carry out his orders to the letter. It was comforting to know he could print these things and still hide his connection with the paper. The secret had been well-guarded and the fake ownership successfully promulgated.

The news story, proof of which he was now reading, was indeed gratifying. He read on:

"The latest phase of the crime wave is the bold and unchecked ravages of this band of blackmailers.

"The utter incompetence of the police is shown by their failure to unearth even a clue. The chief of police himself has un-

dertaken the solution of the dastardly crime, but the result has been nil.

"Aaron Willmore, father of the kidnapped young woman, made this statement to reporters to-day:

"'I can only believe that there are reasons for the police stupidity which do not appear on the surface. If the report that this gang of blackmailers are in league with the police is true, then the public is, of course, helpless to defend itself against them.

"'The stupid bungling and wholly ineffective efforts of the police is but another manifestation of the criminal misgovernment which characterizes the present administration.'"

The story went on at length with its denunciatory text. On another proof there was an editorial designed to express protest and indignation. Buried in one of its paragraphs was the following:

"Detective Sergeant Enrico Farascetti was promoted from patrolman without, it appears, any reason at all. While it is true that he averted a couple of awkward bomb plots because he spoke the plotters' language, and that he likewise captured a half-dozen half-witted black-handers, no magnification of these achievements could possibly justify the sky-rocketing promotions he has been favored with."

Willmore had no complaint to make. Everything was working to his satisfaction.

That sardonic mask of a smile faded when a servant quietly announced:

"Detective Farascetti."

When Farascetti entered great changes had taken place in Willmore's demeanor. He was pacing the floor and wringing his hands in simulated agony.

"And you've found nothing!" he railed at the detective. "Oh! that I should be victimized and my poor daughter maimed because of the gross and criminal incompetence of the police!"

Farascetti's face went white with anger. His eyes snapped fire and his jaw locked. Slowly, however, the facial muscles relaxed again. He smiled faintly, but the fire in his eyes remained.

"Aaron Willmore," said Farascetti in a voice now brittle as steel, "I arrest you for conspiracy to blackmail!"

His speech had been slow, but not so his movements. Almost instantly the astonished Willmore's hands were manacled.

His face was an ashy purple. He choked on words. Such anger is rarely existent outside of hades.

"By thunder!" he spluttered, "you'll sweat for this!" His voice was a fuming, serpent-like hiss.

Farascetti was unmoved. If anything his smile broadened.

"Think so?" he answered evenly. "You know we've got Fayer at headquarters, and he has confessed."

Willmore's eyes nearly leaped out of their sockets. Something within him snapped; it might have been a heart valve. Some instinct made him give a desperate tug at the manacles. They were secure.

Next morning in the chief's office that dignitary was beaming upon Farascetti.

"Yes, yes," he said impatiently, "I get the part about old Willmore hiring that medical student to secure fingers in the dissection room and send them to him. What I don't understand is: How did you ever get that far?"

"Simple enough," Farascetti explained. "I fingerprinted the finger. It was Silky Sadie's. Flynn told me she was dead. The morgue told me the body had gone to the university.

"It was easy to find out that Fayer had worked on her cadaver. Besides, that was his fingerprint on the envelope.

"I later learned Fayer was hard up for money to continue his course."

The chief smiled.

"I guess the *Clarion* will lay off my next promotion. Captain Farascetti, your duties in charge of the Italian precinct began this morning. Better get down there and see that everything is all right. Later I'll have you up to receive the mayor's congratulations. Needless to say, he is tickled to death."

Detecting Female Crooks

THE plot of many a stirring novel could be gleaned from a detective's notebook. One of my most romantic experiences was the investigation of a robbery case in which a woman was concerned. The loser, a merchant, employed three clerks in his store, and every clerk had access to the money-drawers. He had been married only a year and lived in rooms over his store. A stairway ran up from the interior, and on the first day of my arrival I noticed that his wife came down three or four times, helping herself to thread, ribbon, or whatever she fancied or needed. She was a woman not over twenty-two years old, handsome and intelligent, and knew all about what was going on below. I watched closely, but twenty dollars disappeared from the drawer on the second day without my gaining a clue to the thief. Questioning a clerk, he said no one had been near the money-drawer but the merchant's wife.

Next day I sent my employer out on the street and took up my position to watch. Presently the wife came downstairs; tripping along and humming a tune, she went to a box and procured a paper of pins. On her way back she stopped at the money-drawer, took out two bills, and then hurried upstairs. I at once asked the clerks what bills were in the drawer, and they agreed on two fives and a one. When they looked the fives were gone. I went out and told the merchant what I had seen. He could not believe it, of course, and did not until a search among his wife's possessions revealed all the money he had lost from time to time. My work was finished and I went away. How they settled it I do not know. There was a separation for a week, but they came together again and are still man and wife for all I know to the contrary.

Another case was that of the treasurer of a society—a woman—who had seven hundred and twenty-five dollars placed in her hands for a certain purpose. She was told to put it in the bank, but did not, and that night some one entered the house and took the cash. When I came to investigate, I was satisfied that the widow had robbed herself, but to prove it was another thing, as she stood high in the community. I determined to risk all on one throw of the dice. There were a lot of burdocks near the window of an adjoining carpenter-shop, and I gathered three or four, cut a stick to the size of a number four shoe, which I guessed was the widow's size, and, going to the house, I said: "Mrs. Davis, whoever bored those holes in the door did the work from the inside." "W-what!" she gasped, changing color at once. "The thief procured a brace and bit from the neighboring carpenter's shop, crossed your garden and left tracks. Those tracks were made by a woman who wears a number four shoe.

"And here are some burrs I picked up in the kitchen. I want to see the dress you wore yesterday; in fact, all your dresses." "How dare you, sir! I'll have you in prison for this!" I was not there to prosecute her, but to gain a certain end. I told her that if she would follow my advice I would drop the matter and keep her secret, and she went direct to a neighbor's with the money in her hand and claimed to have found it in the garden where the robber must have dropped it as he ran. But, notwithstanding my success in such cases, I dislike to deal with a woman law-breaker. In the first place, she will resort to a score of tricks and subterfuges unknown to men; and if she is not hardened, she will most always manage to invent an excuse calling for mercy and opening a way of escape. It is very seldom that an officer gets any credit in a woman case. She is the weaker party, even if wicked, and she will have more or less public sympathy, no matter how clear the case.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by C. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," By Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by C. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by R. Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith S. Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by B. Poynter
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieut. Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by Wm. H. Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by Chas. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign of the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura R. Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William H. Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by E. Rosemon
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by Wm. H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
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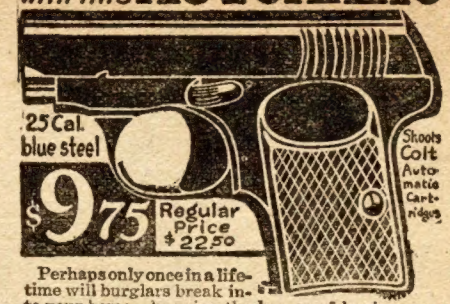

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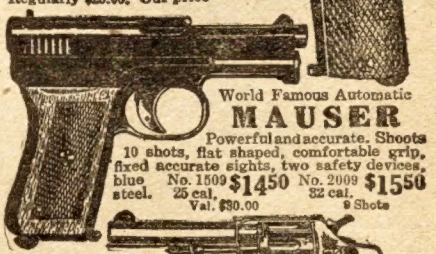

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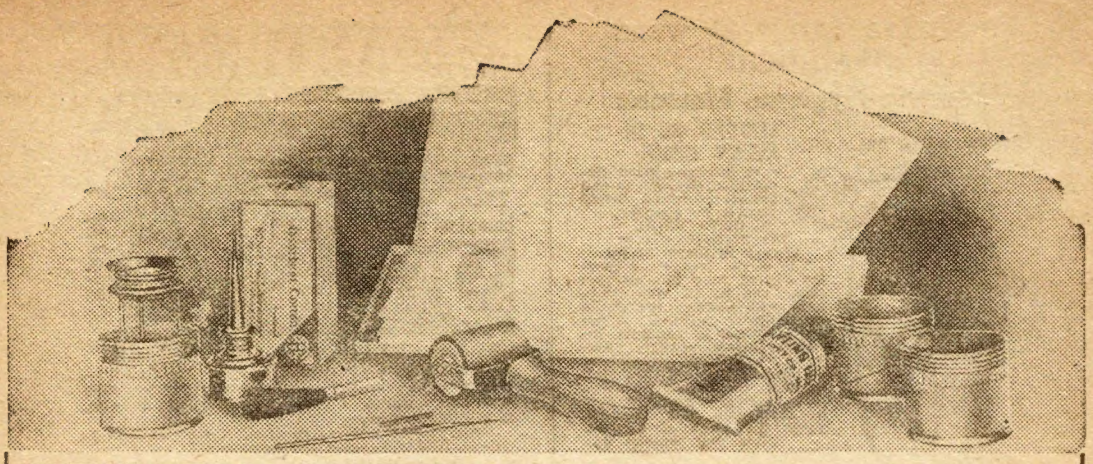

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